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Macworld

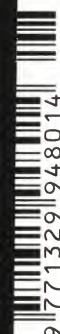
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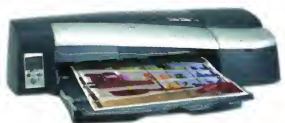
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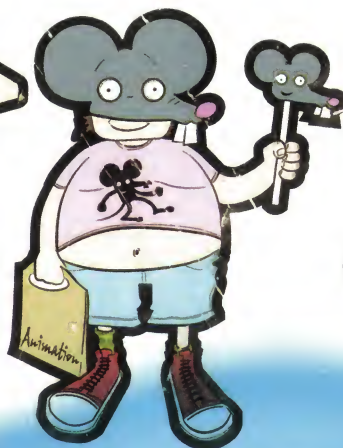
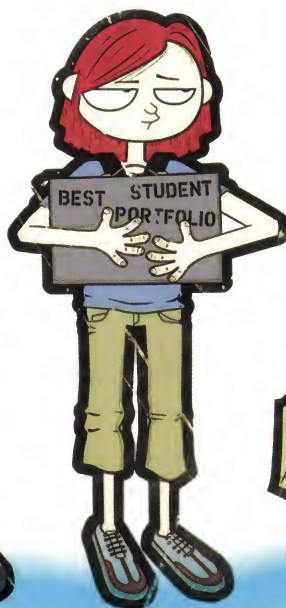
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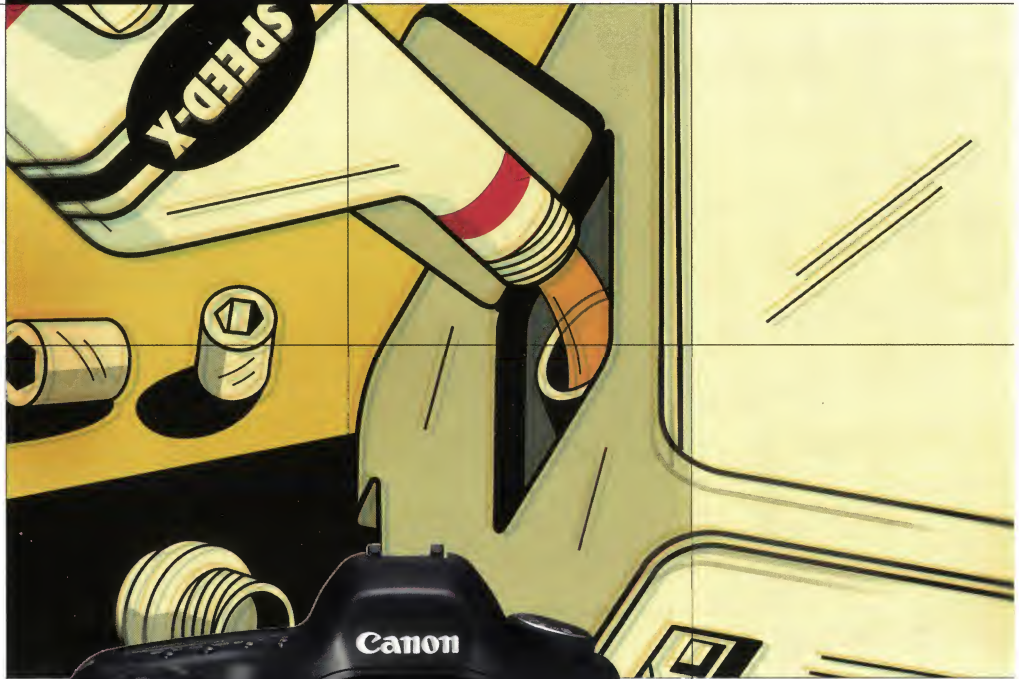
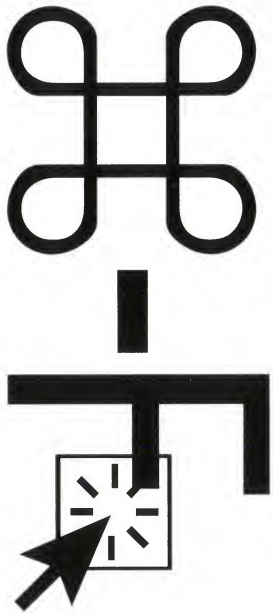
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Focus.

030

The ultimate Mac tune-up

By Various authors

Want to speed up your Mac? Of course you do — no-one ever has too much performance. Our collection of tricks and tweaks will show you how a lot of little adjustments can add up to one big boost.

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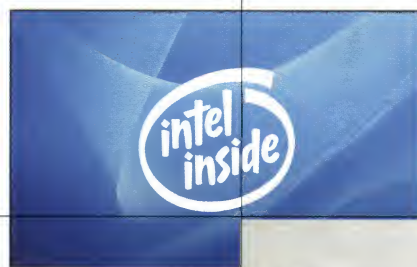
062

Merging traffic ahead

Help folder

064

Tips and queries from our readers



Buzz.

Inside Intel 019

Our first tests of the Intel-based iMacs appear this issue. As we've discovered, though, there's more to it than just "are they faster". There are many factors to consider before buying — for some users the Core Duo Macs will be a great purchase, but for others it's still a good time to wait.

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Voice over IP hardware

071

Cheap phone calls
becoming reality

17-inch iMac Core Duo 1.8GHz

4

20-inch iMac Core Duo 2GHz

4

Intel-based iMacs 075

Not twice as fast, but
plenty fast

GarageBand 3

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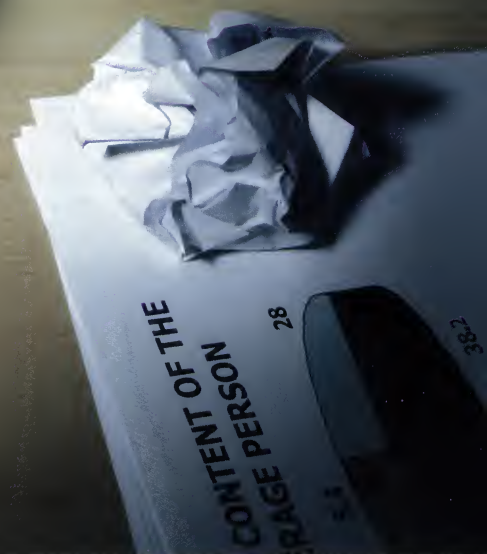
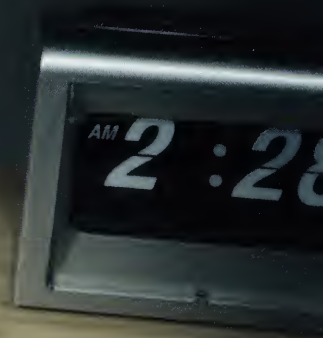
iWeb 1.0

4

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From the Macintosh scene to the magazine.

By Matthew JC. Powell.

**Hot Links**www.ausmac.net

Where to get all the software featured in this month's Off the Net column

A call to arms

I know I promised to bring you further ruminations on the naming of iTunes and MacBooks and whatnot this month, but I received a reader letter that touched a raw nerve and thought I should share.

John Haberecht told me he'd been enquiring about buying a database of genealogical records from a publisher, who told him that the database would only work with Windows. He asked why, and they sent him back an e-mail (which John forwarded me) to say that it would cost them an extra \$10,000 to make the information Mac-compatible.

\$10,000? Where the hell did they get that figure from? What incredible technological complexity can there be that would cause such an amazing cost blowout? Data is data folks, and if you're using a system that's so intrinsically tied to Windows that it's prohibitively expensive to make it accessible to anyone not using Windows, you're using the wrong system.

More likely it's just laziness. Let me tell you a story.

I used to work for a company that had mostly switched from Mac to Windows. Part of this switch involved installation of file servers running Windows NT 4, and the remaining Macs in the building (including mine) simply could not access the file servers. The solution, we Mac folks were told, was to e-mail everything to each other – not highly efficient.

I tried to have a discussion about the issue, and the sysadmin said to me "you should go find someone who's interested in the answer to this problem".

After several minutes of gruelling research on Microsoft's tech database, I discovered that activating Mac services on the Windows NT 4 server involved – wait for it – ticking a box.

I showed this to the sysadmin. More to humour me than anything else, he ticked the box. It worked. We Mac folks were equal citizens again.

Let me tell you another story.

I tried to access a web site last year that sold vintage photographs. I'd moved into an old neighbourhood and wanted to get a few old photos of the place to decorate. The web site, however, was very badly coded, and made calls to a locally-hosted database on the computer of the guy selling the photos – one of those URLs that start with "d://". Web browsers shouldn't allow that, but Internet Explorer for Windows does (naughty, naughty). No Mac browser does.

I actually phoned the guy, and explained to him that his web site didn't work properly, and told him why. His answer; "are you sure it's my web site that doesn't work, and not yours?" I ended up using Virtual PC to buy the photo.

One other story.

My mother died at the end of December. In the first week of January I put together the order of service booklet for her funeral, and with very little time to spare took it (as a PDF on CD) to OfficeWorks to get it printed.

When I got there they looked at me like some kind of alien. "Oh," they said, "we usually get people to print up the pages on A4, then we reproduce them and make it into a booklet automatically." Most of their customers, it seems, don't know how to assemble a booklet properly. Fair enough.

"It's OK," I said, "I do this stuff for a living. It's properly assembled – just print it."

"What did you use to create it," they asked?

"InDesign on my Mac."

"Oh," they said, "we can't use Mac discs on our PCs. You'll have to take it to a Mac printer."

The CD was absolutely standard, cross-platform compatible, nothing fancy. The PDF file on it was also completely standard. I was standing there, grieving for my mother, just wanting some damn thing to go right, and this idiot was doing whatever he could to convince me he couldn't possibly do the job.

I told him "put the CD in your computer and check". I said this as calmly as I could, since at the time I wished to do him harm. He put the disc in the machine. The file showed up, and was readable – no problems.

Just between you and me, I have had it up to here (gestures slightly above scalp) with this ignorant, pig-headed crap.

I'm not going to put up with it anymore, and neither should you. Someone tells you their data simply cannot be accessed by a Mac, make them prove it. If they are locked into a proprietary system, ask them why they allowed their data to become someone else's hostage. Someone's web site uses junk code that Windows will allow but no sensible browser would, take them to task – make them improve it.

I don't know how many customers the idiot at OfficeWorks sent away before I took a stand. I'd be willing to bet management of the company would be grateful that I took the time to educate one of their staff, though, regardless of how annoying I might have seemed at the time.

Rise up – what have we got to lose? ☞

Matthew JC. Powell

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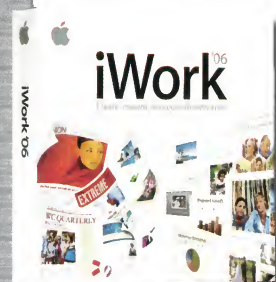
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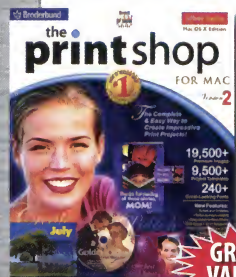
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Your magazine, your forum.



On Tour letter of the month.

For the next issue, Conexus (02 9975 2799) will be giving a JBL On Tour Portable Music Box valued at \$194.95 to the *Australian Macworld* reader who sends in what we deem to be the most interesting letter.

On Tour is a compact, lightweight, high performance sound system, and connected to your iPod, iPod mini, MP3 player or other music source, will provide hours of clean, powerful sound. The stereo mini jack connection allows you to enjoy high quality audio from a variety of portable devices including laptops as well as CD players and desktop computers. On Tour comes with slick touch pad controls for volume, and will remember your last volume setting after the system shuts down. The unit also features an integrated protective cover and stand, with the sliding cover serving as a stand when open. On Tour has a universal AC adapter for worldwide use and an audio input cable is included. Proprietary technology ensures the On Tour thumps out quality bass and clear accurate sound.

Size does matter

I've finally managed to transfer all my data from my dear old Tower G3 to my brand new iMac Intel Core Duo, so time to burn some of the excess to disc.

I popped a blank disc in the side loading slot (a CD-R), burnt it, and pressed the eject button on the keyboard, and pressed, and pressed, but it just stayed inside, making all sorts of odd "trying to pop out" noises.

To cut a very long and frustrating story short, the only way I managed to eject the disc was to hold the 20" iMac physically on its side and let the eject button and gravity do the work — it did.

So why did this happen? I tested another blank disc, a DVD this time. It popped out first go.

The answer is size (actually thickness) of the disc being used — anything under 1.2mm thick and do not expect it to pop out of the side-loading slot. If you dig deep enough into Apple's support web sites you will find this statement:

"The 120mm round discs are the only size and shape that work with either slot loading or tray loading drives. Warning: These discs must be between 1.2mm and 1.5mm in thickness. Discs that are thicker than 1.5mm or thinner than 1.2mm are not supported and any damage caused will not be covered under your Apple warranty or applicable extended service contract."

Letters should be e-mailed to matthew.powell@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Mailbox" or by post to *Australian Macworld* Mailbox, 3/165 Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, Victoria 3182. Letters of fewer than 200 words are given preference. We reserve the right to edit letters and probably will. To be eligible for the On Tour prize, you must include your full name and address, including state or territory.

Disc manufacturers, both CD and DVD, do utilise different disc thicknesses, so if you are contemplating a slot-loading Mac beware. For your information the offending brand of CD disc that I was using was Teac.

Dennis Nicholson
via internet

Thanks for that, Dennis. It's not really the sort of thing I usually think about when buying blank media, but I certainly will from now on. — M.J.C.P.

Nokia versus Mac

It is driving me crazy not being able to synchronise my Nokia 3200 to either my iMac or iBook. Calling Nokia left me with a simple answer: no. The Nokia PC suite doesn't work with Mac OS X. Neither is there a third party application that supports it. I do know that some Nokia phones work with iSync, but not the 3200. I called Apple, but with Apple's telephone support, After waiting five minutes, they decide that I have been waiting too long, and hang up on me! So I really don't know what to do. I hope Apple and Microsoft's plan to make everything compatible includes the Nokia 3200!

Jeremy Smart
Berridale, NSW

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: if a required feature of your mobile phone is that it should be able to synchronise with your Mac, check Apple's

iSync device compatibility page (see "Hot links") before you sign anything. The page is not always completely up to date, but if the phone you're looking at isn't on there, don't get it. I haven't been able to find a third-party utility either, so if any readers know of anything to help Jeremy out, please drop me a line. — M.J.C.P.

Disappointment

Not so long ago, I actually defended the iMac. Now I think one may be forgiven for thinking that the new iMacs are a stab in the back to customers. Apple's curious decision not to use dual-core G5 chips in the last update is now explained by the fact that only two months later, the best-designed computer ever is already superseded.

The very iMac I am using at the moment was purchased under the belief that it had a bit of life in it yet, and so soon after an update, there would be no need to wait a while for a better model.

Clearly, Apple opted not to use the dual-core chips it put in the PowerMac because the speed benefits accomplished by the Intel Core Duo would have been minimal, or more likely, fallen short. Apple selling the new Intel models alongside the PowerPCs is proof that Apple knows it has opened Pandora's box and must avoid legal action. After all, no one can complain if they're the same price.



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The MacBook Pro, which spells the end of the PowerBook and iBook (and will probably be known as merely the MacBook at consumer level), as well as being christened with a terrible name, is also false advertising. No mention has been made as to the battery life, the supposed reason behind the switch. Such an omission is a little suspicious. According to Adam Christiansen, renowned Mac man on the podcast front, journos inquiring after the battery life were met with evasive answers and no indication if it was better or worse than the PowerBooks. Pro is hardly the term for a machine without a dual layer burner, FireWire 800 and modem.

Luke Mansour
Ringwood, Victoria

Battery life wasn't the "supposed reason behind the switch," Luke, power consumption was. Steve did talk about the power consumption to performance ratio of the processors in his Macworld Expo keynote, but the power consumption of the processor is not the same as the power consumption of the MacBook, which has a brighter screen than the PowerBook it replaces. Last time I asked Apple about battery life on the MacBook, I was told the testing hadn't been finalised, but that it would likely end up being much the same as for the PowerBooks (where the power-hungry G5 processor would have meant much shorter battery life). We'll see. — M.J.C.P.

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Short and sweet

Hey Matthew, isn't it a good job they didn't call them ProLaps??!

John Curlie
via internet

Yes, John, yes it is. — M.J.C.P.

Cards for all

Although it might be disappointing that Apple stores aren't able to stock iTunes cards, I find it much more convenient having them available at Coles Myer Stores. Living in country Queensland, the closest Apple Store or reseller is in Brisbane, three hours away. However, we do have three outlets selling iTunes cards in our town, of less than 10,000. Being a minor, I don't have a credit card to purchase from the store. Perhaps Apple decided to make the deal with ColesMyer to give access to the iTunes to people not living in the city.

Gareth Morgan,
Dalby, Qld.

No doubt you're right, Gareth, and it is good for Apple and its customers that the cards are available as widely as possible. It's just a shame that the company's long-suffering specialist resellers have been duded yet again. — M.J.C.P.

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Hemispheric disorders

I'm originally from Canada and since moving to Australia I've found myself subject to a number of hemispheric disorders — I get most directions wrong by 180 degrees and I'll never get to really appreciate that October is spring rather than fall.

It seems that *Australian Macworld* is subject to some of the same disorders. Your "Easy solutions for difficult shots" article (AMW 01.2006) suggests natural lighting from a north-facing window as an ideal light source. We should change this to "south-facing" down here.

Todd Heather
via internet

You know, I moved from Canada 23 years ago, and I still get that wrong. By the way, we call it "autumn" here. — M.J.C.P.

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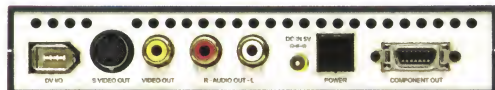
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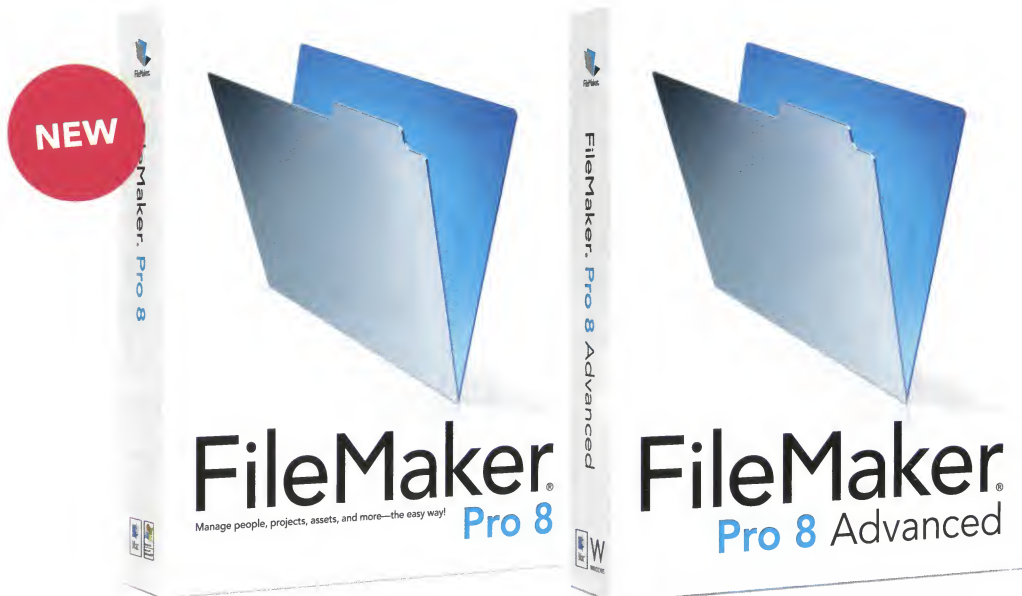


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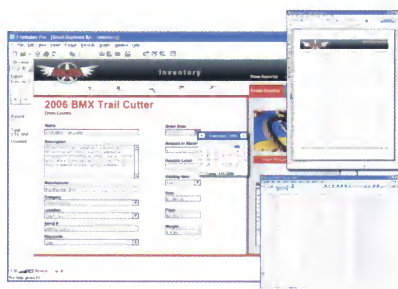


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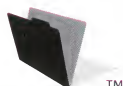
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Inside Intel

What our lab tests say about Intel Macs and the future of the Intel transition

OUR first review of the Intel-based iMacs appears in this issue, starting on page 075. Since that testing, though, we've continued to run and re-run further tests on the machines, trying to uncover potential performance traps for the unaware. It's not as simple as "are they or are they not faster," as we discovered. There are many factors to take into account and the answer depends very much on what type of user you are, and what your expectations are going to be.

2x or not 2x? When Steve Jobs stood on stage at Macworld Expo in January, he claimed that the new iMac ran as much as two to three times faster than the previous iMac, and the new MacBook Pro laptop ran as much as four to five times faster than the PowerBook G4. There was loud applause from the crowd and a sigh of relief from Mac-watchers everywhere.

Of course, as Jobs himself pointed out, those performance claims were based on some very specific tests. When we tested the new Intel-based iMac, we found that speeds varied widely — but that many tasks commonly run by Mac users today only run between 1.1 and 1.3 times as fast (or, if you prefer, 10 to 30 percent faster) on the Intel-based 2GHz iMac as on the 2.1GHz iMac G5. So while Apple's iMac web pages prominently display

a badge proclaiming "2x faster," the reality is far more complicated — and for most typical uses, far less dramatic.

Let's be clear: Apple wasn't fibbing when it reported that certain tests showed that the new Intel iMac was faster than its predecessor by factors from 1.9 to 3.2. However, those tests were carefully selected to show the new iMacs at their very best, ideal cases designed to put the the new Intel Core Duo chip that powers these systems in the best possible light.

We did see similarly dramatic results in a few of our tests. Rendering a 3D scene using the Java-based program Art of Illusion, the Intel-based iMac was 3.2 times as fast as its G5 counterpart. (It was also faster than a dual-processor Power Mac G5, suggesting that these Intel Macs are much better than PowerPC-based models when it comes to Java performance.) In two tests using a not-yet-public Universal beta of Aspyr's Doom 3, the new iMac was 1.7 and 2.1 times better. Yet many of our other tests showed comparatively modest speed improvements, with the Intel-based system commonly between 1.1 and 1.3 times as fast as the G5 model.

In tests with two iLife '06 applications — iMovie and iPhoto — we found remarkably different performance depending on what features of the programs we tried. For example, the act of applying one iMovie effect to a video clip resulted in a remarkable speed improvement of 1.8 times, but a different effect showed only half the improvement, and yet another showed no speed improvement at all. More strangely, both of our attempts to export from iMovie (to an iPod and to a web-encoded movie) were slower on the Intel-based Mac. (Apple says it's investigating the issue.)

Importing 100 photos into iPhoto 6 was 1.5 times faster, and exporting from iPhoto to a QuickTime movie was 1.3 times faster. Exporting iPhoto images to a web page was only slightly faster, and exporting those images to files was actually slower on the Intel-based Macs.



Other tests – creating a Zip archive in the Finder, encoding an audio file in iTunes, and generating a DVD image (including all required MPEG-2 rendering) in iDVD – resulted in the most common range of speed improvements, between 1.1 and 1.2 times as fast on the Intel-based iMac as on the iMac G5.

Are two cores better than one? There are numerous reasons for such variations in test results. By far the most important has to do with the dual-core nature of the Intel Core Duo.

In the past, Macs got faster largely because the clock speeds of the processors got faster – for example, a 1.2GHz PowerBook G4 was clearly faster than a 1GHz PowerBook G4. However, there's another way to make a Mac faster: add more processors. Apple's used this approach before. Multiprocessor Power Macs have been available for a while; all the current Power Mac G5 models use dual-core chips, which essentially contain two processors on one physical chip.

Here's the catch, though: adding processors to a Mac doesn't automatically boost system speed the way increasing the clock speed does. That's because programs must be specifically designed to support multiple processors to gain any benefit.

Since powerhouse Power Macs have supported multiple processors for years now, many heavy-duty professional programs – including graphics tools such as Adobe Photoshop, 3D tools such as Maya and Cinema 4D, and video tools such as Final Cut Pro Studio and Adobe After Effects – have been modified to take

advantage of multiprocessing. As Intel-specific versions of such apps arrive, they'll undoubtedly perform well on these new iMacs.

But these iMacs are consumer systems, and many consumer-level apps don't really take advantage of multiprocessing. To really take advantage of the Core Duo's second processor, such programs will need to be updated to add better multiprocessor optimisation. (Note that, if you're running several programs at once, Mac OS X is smart enough to spread them out across multiple processors. That can provide a speed boost if a user is multitasking, switching between several processor-intensive programs at once.)



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To find out just how much our test programs took advantage of the iMac's dual-core chip, we disabled one of the iMac's two cores and re-ran several of our tests. The results showed, for example, that some tasks in iPhoto (importing images and exporting a QuickTime movie) took advantage of the second processor core much more than others (exporting to files and web pages). iTunes is very good at using both processor cores for ripping MP3s, while the Finder seems to only use a single processor when creating our Zip archive.

Rosetta: compatibility with a caveat. There's yet another wrinkle in the performance of these new Intel-based iMacs: Different processors speak different languages. Programs compiled for the PowerPC chip can't run natively on these new Intel CPUs. Instead, they have to run through Rosetta, an emulation technology that lets Intel-based Macs run PowerPC apps by translating their commands into ones Intel chips can understand.

All of our tests showed that PowerPC applications run less than half as fast on a 2GHz Intel iMac than on the 2.1GHz iMac G5, but those speed differences are relative. Yes, if you're upgrading to an Intel-based iMac from an iMac G5 you bought just a few months ago, your PowerPC apps will run half as fast. If you're upgrading from a two- to four-year-old iMac, you might not see any slow-down – and you might see a speed-up.

For example, when we compared the new 2GHz iMac to a 700MHz iMac G4, the first-generation flat-panel iMac released in 2002, we found that the Intel iMac executed our Rosetta application tests much faster than its four-year-old predecessor.

Since many of the everyday applications people use aren't particularly processor-intensive (Microsoft Office being a great example) those applications should probably seem quite usable under Rosetta. Other programs (games, for instance) may be well-nigh unusable.

The speed of applications running under Rosetta will be something to keep in mind, especially when it comes to the forthcoming release of the MacBook Pro. The users of that professional-level laptop are far more likely to demand serious speed from their applications; if there's no Universal version of Photoshop available at the time, professional photographers may balk at the idea of running Photoshop at a fraction of its speed. However, given how relatively slow the current PowerBook G4 line may be, the situation may not be that bad. Since Photoshop can take advantage of the MacBook Pro's dual-core processor, even a non-Intel version of Photoshop may be quite usable on the MacBook Pro compared to current PowerBook G4s. We won't know for sure until the MacBook Pro arrives and we have a chance to put it through the same tests as the Core Duo iMac.

When Universal isn't enough. Just because a program is Universal doesn't mean that it's reached its full speed potential on Intel-based Macs. Software development is an evolutionary process. Even if software vendors (including Apple) have delivered Universal versions of their apps in time to run on these first Intel iMacs, there's every reason to believe they'll continue to tweak and refine those apps to work better and better on the new CPUs. For example, Apple officials have admitted to us that iLife '06 could stand to be better optimised.



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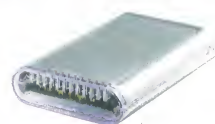
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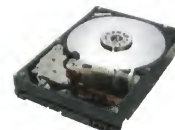
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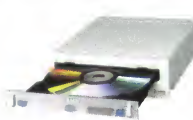
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Those developers have already gone through that optimisation process for PowerPC-based Macs. Some programs, for example, offer features written to specifically take advantage of the G4 and G5 processors' Velocity Engine, a special set of accelerated commands. Many of these features will need to be modified to take advantage SSE/MMX, the Intel equivalent of Velocity Engine.

In addition, the tools that developers use – Apple's Xcode development environment and Intel's collection of code compilers – will also likely improve, making it easier for developers to wring even more performance out of their Intel-compatible software. Even portions of Mac OS X itself, although they do run natively on Intel processors, will likely benefit from further optimisation.

Alien software: running Classic and Windows. The release of Intel-based Macs is a major milestone for users of Mac OS 9 software.

Intel-based Macs don't support Mac OS X's Classic mode, so if you rely on old-school Mac OS 9 applications to get your job done, these new Macs simply aren't for you. While it's extremely unlikely that Apple will ever bring back Classic, you may be able to use a Mac emulator, sort of like a Mac equivalent of VirtualPC. At press time, two emulators were already available in "experimental versions" for Intel Macs: SheepShaver, which emulates a Power Mac, and Basilisk II, which emulates either a Mac Classic or Mac II (see "Hot links"). Keep in mind that, since they're both emulators, they'll be running those Classic applications at low speed.

Anyone who's had to keep a spare PC around the office to run Windows programs, on the other hand, might well have rejoiced at the news of Apple's switch to Intel. Such rejoicing is, for now, premature. There isn't yet a verified way to install Windows on your Mac and boot into it. (Intel-based Macs use a boot system called EFI, rather than the more traditional BIOS, which makes things harder: Windows XP doesn't support EFI, although the forthcoming Windows Vista will.) Plenty of clever hackers are working hard at the problem, and it's only a matter of time before someone figures it out.

Still, it's likely that Microsoft will also update Virtual PC so that it runs on Intel-based Macs. When that happens you can expect that it'll run Windows at speeds approaching those you'd find on a normal PC. (It won't be full speed, however, because Windows will be running inside an application and sharing space with the rest of your Mac.) Other Windows-in-a-box products will probably appear as well. So the future of running Windows stuff on your PC will be bright, eventually.

Different chips for different folks. The Intel Core Duo is a processor designed for laptops, providing a compromise between performance and good power-consumption and heat-generation characteristics. So the Core Duo processor in these new iMacs (as well as the forthcoming MacBook Pro) is clearly not meant to be the be-all, end-all when it comes to raw computing power.

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As a result, it's difficult to take these first Intel-based Macs and try to extrapolate the future of the Mac product line from them. For example, Apple's forthcoming professional desktop Macs – whatever they're called, since they almost certainly won't be called Power Macs – will most likely use a new, high-speed Intel chip designed specifically for desktop PCs. They'll be fast, and they'll be designed to trade off a bit in terms of power consumption in exchange for speed. (They'll also probably support 64-bit processing, which is important to many users of the current Power Mac G5.)

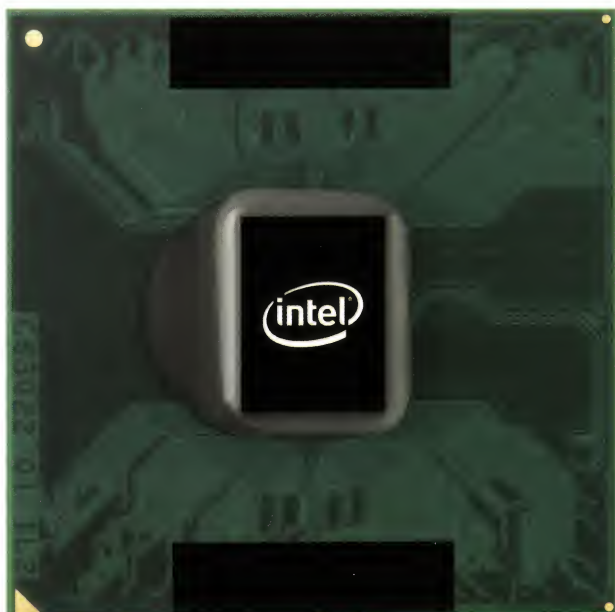
On the other end of things, there's no way of telling how Apple might take advantage of the forthcoming low-power version of the Core Duo processor, not to mention the Core Duo's low-power single-core sibling, the Core Solo. All of Intel's various chips give Apple a large palette to paint with; the big mystery is which colours Steve Jobs will choose to use.

The last word. With two iMac models as our only solid evidence of the Mac's transition to Intel processors, it's far too soon to issue any final judgments about how the transition will go. There are still lots of huge questions yet to be resolved, including the speed of the MacBook Pro, the speed of Apple's forthcoming Universal versions of its professional applications, and just how fast the first professional Intel-based desktop Macs will be. (Even more tantalising are the forthcoming Mac models we can't even anticipate yet!)

However, these new iMacs do clear up several mysteries and generally make us feel that the Intel transition may be a pretty smooth one. Apple's claim that the new iMac is 2x faster than the previous model may be debatable, but the fact that it is noticeably faster at almost every native task – and much, much faster at tasks that are multi-processor-friendly – is indisputable.

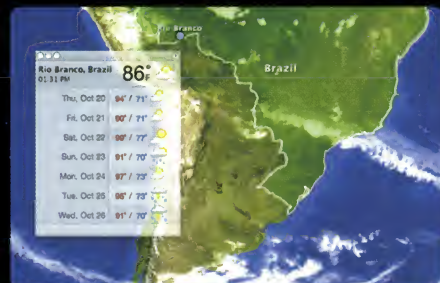
We also expect that as time goes on, the apparent speed of these first Intel Macs will increase, thanks to optimisations in Mac OS X and individual applications that take better advantage of multiple processors and specific traits of the Intel-based Mac architecture. Of course, as programs that currently run in Rosetta are updated to be Universal, users will see notable speed improvements.

Most importantly – and when we get deep down into talking about chips and test results, it's easy to fail to see the forest for the trees – these new systems are Macs, period. That Intel chip embedded deep inside may have a lot of meaning when it comes to the appearance, features, and performance of future Mac models – but you'd never know it from sitting down at one of these iMacs. The Intel revolution has begun, not with a bang, but with a familiar and comforting Mac boot-up chime. • Jason Snell



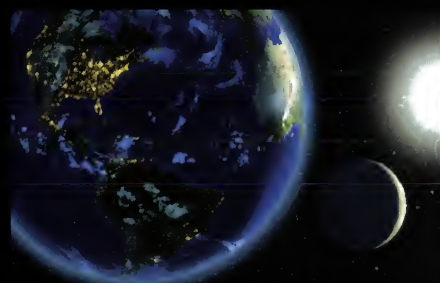
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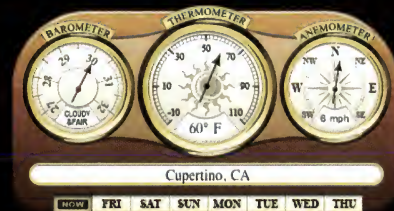
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■ COMPETITION WINNER



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Get this party started

BACK in the November 2005 issue Innovision and AMW offered readers an opportunity to win a fantastic InMotion 7 portable speaker system from Altec-Lansing, the speakers that let you start a party anywhere you can take your iPod.

To win the prize, all you had to do was send in your funky, hot playlists – ten songs you would use to get a party started.

Well, our team of funky judges (which did not, incidentally, include the editor of this esteemed publication, who lacks the requisite funk) has pored over the playlists, elevating the funk and eliminating the junk, and at last reached its verdict.

The winner is Mark Cooper, whose playlist avoided the trap of including anything by the B-52s or Dire Straits (our judges were very harsh on those particular bands, for some reason). His entry included Basement Jaxx, Bloc Party and Kaiser Chiefs, none of whom your humble editor has ever heard of, though he is more familiar with The White Stripes, Missy Elliot and the Prodigy, all of whom also featured.



So it seems the designers at Niche Media would feel well-pumped by a party hosted at Mark's place, with music belting out of his new InMotion speakers. Just don't invite me, OK?

Apology: the results of this competition were promised for the February issue but we were unable to complete judging in time.

• Matthew JC. Powell



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iLife '06
groups.yahoo.com/group/coffs_mac_users
Toowoomba Apple and Macintosh Group (TAAMUG)
Fonts, generation and usage
www.taamug.org.au
- Fri 3: **South Australian Apple Users' Group (SAAUG)**
Multimedia Presentation
Annual General Meeting
www.saaug.org.au
- Sat 4: **AUSOM Incorporated**
Main Meeting
www.ausom.net.au/nextmeeting.html
- Mon 6: **AMUG Sydney**
Main Meeting
homepage.mac.com/sydamug/
- Tue 7: **WAMUG**
Main Meeting
www.wamug.org.au
- Sun 12: **Gold Coast Apple Users group**
Presenting the new MacBook Pro
home.worldlink.com.au/appleserv/GCUsers.html
- Mon 13: **North Queensland Macintosh Users Group**
Monthly meeting
www.nqmug.org
MUGSUNCO
Monthly Meeting
www.mugsunco.org.au
- Tues 14: **Macintosh Multimedia Group**
www.ausom.net.au/nextmeeting.html
ACT Apple User Group
Main Meeting
www.actapple.org.au
- Wed 15: **South Australian Apple Users' Group (SAAUG)**
Question & Answer Session
www.saaug.org.au
Sydney Mac Users Group (SMUG)
Broadband Choices – What's Best for Me (which ISP, what plans, what about VOIP and other services) + Apple Turns 30
www.sydney.macusersgroup.org
Retirees & Others Group
www.ausom.net.au/nextmeeting.html
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www.apple-q.org.au
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gmug.wamug.org.au
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■ ANALYSIS



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The cheese the mouse ate

Apple to benefit from Disney's Pixar buy

DISNEY'S \$US7.4 billion purchase of Pixar Animation Studios could strengthen the ties between another company headed by Steve Jobs, analysts say. Potential benefits to Apple from the Disney-Pixar union include everything from more content on the iTunes Music Store to increased visibility for the computer maker inside the one of the world's leading media creators.

"Disney is already an early supporter of Apple's video efforts," said Ross Rubin, director of analysis at NPD Group. He notes that the two companies already have a good working relationship – at least when it comes to making content available to users.

Disney's ABC television network and Disney Channel cable network have provided for-sale programming at the US version of Apple's iTunes Music Store ever since the store began offering videos in October, 2005. ESPN content was added to the store earlier this year. "It's a new way of reaching viewers and an opportunity to drive incremental revenue networks wouldn't have had otherwise," Rubin added.

"For the short term they're already on target with a good relationship," agreed Michael Gartenberg, VP and research director at JupiterResearch. "Apple's already reaped a lot of benefits."

The NeXT step. Disney's absorption of Pixar puts Steve Jobs on the company's board of directors and appoints Pixar's John Lasseter as Disney's new Chief Creative Officer. Parallels have been drawn between this transaction and Apple's acquisition of NeXT in the mid-90s, which brought about Steve Jobs' return to Apple and his eventual elevation as then-CEO Gil Amelio's replacement.

To this day, NeXT's influence can still be felt at Apple's executive levels. Besides Jobs himself, NeXT alumni at Apple include Avie Tevanian, Apple's chief software technology Officer, Bertrand Serlet, Apple's senior vice president of software engineering and Jon Rubenstein, Apple's senior vice president iPod division.

Ultimately, NeXT's operating system served as the basis for Mac OS X. In some ways, Apple watchers argue, it was NeXT

that took over Apple. Could the same thing happen to Disney? "I don't think [Disney CEO] Bob Iger is Gil Amelio," Gartenberg said, "and I don't think that the allure of running Disney is the same as running Apple for Steve Jobs. Having said that, Steve Jobs is now Disney's biggest shareholder [the stock-only deal gives Jobs seven percent of Disney]. He'll want to protect his investment and grow the business. Disney would be wise to take his counsel."

NPD's Rubin thinks that Pixar's influence will be key to Disney's success going forward. "Pixar has had an uncanny string of success – not a single bomb in their history," he said. "It's clearly more than about the technology: They've been gathering writers and storytellers that are doing a better job of capturing the attention of the audience than Disney has."

Where do we go from here? Are full-length Disney feature films on the horizon for the iTunes Music Store?

For now, Apple's emphasis in selling videos online is still on short subjects and television shows. Rubin thinks this has to do with the delivery medium.

"Much of the iTunes Music Store's purpose in life is to help support the iPod and to make content conveniently available for that device," Rubin said. "The iPod has a relatively small screen and depends on relatively limited broadband capacity. That drove compromises such as limited resolution for videos that look fine on an iPod screen but tend to reveal some of their shortcomings on a plasma screen or something you might find today in your living room."

As internet bandwidth in North America ratchets up and as Apple develops more sophisticated video-capable iPods, however, Rubin sees a different picture emerging.

"We'll eventually see the resolution of the video increase and we'll see longer content," he added. Rubin also expects

that the audience for that kind of content won't match the size of the audience that just wants TV shows and shorter videos, and that poses a different challenge for companies like Apple and Disney.

"If you're going to be taking this out of the home, do most consumers have the time window in which to watch a feature length movie? The longer the video is, the smaller the audience is that will have the luxury to watch it," he said.

Jobs' presence on Disney's board might push the two companies to tackle that challenge. "If Apple for example were to become more aggressive in its development of a computer solution in the living room the ability to add premium content from a company like Disney would be a big win," Rubin said.

For his part, JupiterResearch's Gartenberg believes Apple and Disney complement each other very well. "Disney creates content, while Apple creates tools that make content," he said. "We'll surely see more ways for them to work together in the future." • *Peter Cohen*



By Dan Warne.

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Keep your Firefox bookmarks in sync between multiple computers with this Firefox extension.

■ MySync 0.70b \$US35 Shareware X (10.4)

Synchronise between Macs on your local network without needing an expensive .Mac account. Uses OS X's inbuilt sync services to sync Safari Bookmarks, Calendars, Contacts, Mail Accounts, Mail Rules, Signatures, and Smart Mailboxes.

■ Bookit 3.7 \$US12 Shareware X (10.2.8 or later)

Synchronise bookmarks on your Mac between multiple browsers. Supports Shiira, Safari, Camino, Firefox, Omniweb, Opera, Mozilla, iCab, Internet Explorer and Netscape.

■ Flip4Mac 2.0.1 Freeware X (10.3.9 or later)

Play Windows Media Video in QuickTime. Now Microsoft's official replacement for the woeful Windows Media Player for Macintosh.

■ Texpander 1.2.2 Donationware X (10.3.9 or later)

This program allows you to set up abbreviations and their expanded equivalent, so you can type "mysig" and automatically have it replaced with "Best regards, Dan Warne". Works in any program.

■ PathFinder 4.0 \$US34.95 Shareware X (10.4)

An alternative to the Finder, allowing speedier, better laid out and more efficient file navigation. Tabbed windows, file selection by criteria, a preview pane with slideshow and more.

■ Sysstat Nano 1.1 Freeware X (10.4)

A small, Australian-made Dashboard widget that allows you to flip through various panes and see all sorts of system statistics about how your Mac is running.

■ DVD Player Patch 1.9 Freeware X (10.3, 10.4)

Tell your Mac who's boss and gain full control over the Mac OS X DVD player. You'll never be forced to sit through compulsory intro sequences ever again.

■ TrimTheFat 0.4 Freeware X (10.4)

Universal apps are always twice as big as they need to be, because your Mac is either Intel or PowerPC, and you don't need the code for the other chip type. This app strips out the code that's not needed for your Mac from any application you choose.

■ MemoryUsageGetter 2.6 \$US10 Shareware X (10.4)

Yes, the OS X Activity Viewer shows you currently running software CPU usage and memory consumption, but this app helps you visualise the stats more easily, with bar graphs for memory usage. You can also force-quit multiple apps at once.

■ MacCrackAttack 1.1.3 Freeware X (10.2 or later)

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The view from the other side of the counter.

By Fleur Doidge.

A blurring of purposes

HERE we are in the third month of 2006 already. I hope you have all been as successful as I have. Not. You lot are probably a lot smarter than I am. (Here's hoping).

Apple, on the other hand, has been doing rather well. Sales over the Christmas and New Year period were strong and encouraging, according to industry pundits such as Piper Jaffray and IDC. The Macworld Expo saw the new Intel Apple iMacs rather well-received and some people reckon that Apple has overtaken mass-market doyen Dell Computer in terms of market value. Oi, Michael Dell — what was that about shutting down Apple and giving the money to the shareholders?

Even better, its sometimes whinging, sometimes complaining channel partners have been a little quieter this year. That may mean they're happier. At the very least, it means they're busier, which should also mean they are more contented, at least at work. More work means more sales, which means more money. Usually.

There will certainly be more product. Already, the MacBook Pro, which may or may not be little more than a renamed PowerBook, has hit the stores.

To maximise any gains from these new products, Apple resellers need to ensure they carry a broad range of third-party stock that adds value to Apple product. In sales, it is return visits that make the money, so resellers need to work harder on getting those customers in, even if they don't want a new iPod or Macintosh. This year, it looks likely that all things mobile and wireless will be excellent attractors for feet on the street.

Not all signs lead to Rome, though. Microsoft has been giving with one hand in the mobility and compatibility department while taking away with the other. Although it is working on more Mac-compatible products, it has stopped work on Windows Media Player for the Mac. Future updates and product support are also reportedly unlikely.

Apple itself needs to watch that it doesn't throw out the goose that laid the golden eggs as it offers more and more different multimedia and home entertainment devices under various Mac monikers. The thing with Apple is its ability to make people think it offers 'very, very cool stuff'. That's not generally a rational response to technology — more an emotional one.

Like commentator Russell Beattie, I believe that one of the most important secrets to Apple's success over the last 10 years is its brilliance in marketing itself that way. As Beattie says, "the impression a consumer has of a product isn't as important as the impression they



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apple.slashdot.org/article.pl?sid=06/01/14/0032228&from=rss

Slashdot, on Apple surpassing Dell's market value

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Article on the difference between sales and marketing

have of themselves as a result of using the product." Steve Jobs, according to Beattie, has cultivated an impression of the Mac consumer as an elitist and gone on stroking that image.

Apple — and its resellers — have to take care that the near-iconic aura around Apple doesn't become dissipated via the move to Intel, the increased partnership with Microsoft, the shrinking of size and function represented by products such as the Mac mini, the iPod nano and the Shuffle. Those are, after all, "bargain basement" products.

Australia-based Apple resellers and retailers this year are going to have to struggle harder against the influx of PC and other IT resellers into areas that for a long time have been considered the preserve of Mac consumers. The IT channel in general is getting tooled up to sell more and more convergent, mobile and multimedia devices — especially ones that recognise the blurring of home use with business purposes.


That means Apple resellers are going to have to learn more about security and networking. Not just the education guys — everyone. Increasingly, customers want to buy product that they can use at home or at work, that will segue neatly with their computer setup at work without giving the IT manager an apoplectic fit.

Convenience and security are no longer the simple buzzwords they were a few years ago. Organisations of all stripes are taking this stuff pretty seriously these days and resellers must be able to demonstrate quality fulfillment in these areas now consumers want

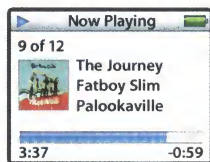
their dollars to stretch even further.

We know Apple product can generally do the job, but how many of the resellers are sufficiently conversant with today's trends in business computing — especially in large enterprises with large numbers of mobile workers using a wide range of devices — to confidently sell to that need?

Resellers could do with more help from the vendors to skill up and diversify. Pity a certain company here seems so reluctant to let resellers expand their Apple retail proposition: Ben Morgan, at AppleCentre Taylor Square in Sydney, had his grand plan for an Apple Store-type retail expansion refused, as many of you probably know.

Yes, Apple is a marketing-driven rather than a market-driven company. The challenge is whether Steve Jobs and his disciples can keep balancing that effectively against ever-intensifying complexity in customer needs. 

Fleur Doidge is a longtime observer of the Mac reseller channel in Australia.



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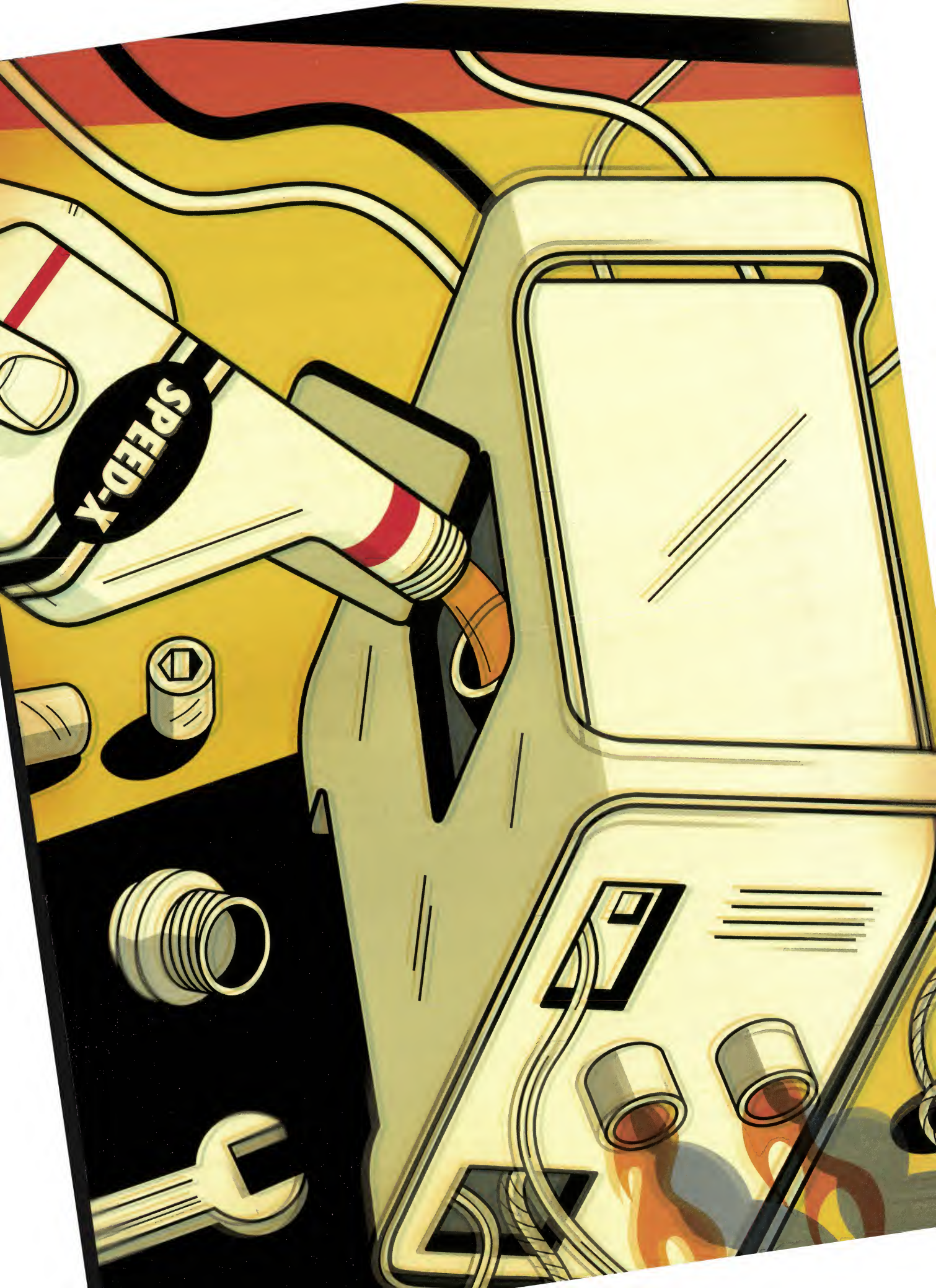
Want to speed up your Mac? Lots of little tweaks here and there can add up to a big performance boost.

APPLE does a pretty good job of making sure your Mac's performance is well tuned right out of the box. So there aren't many single things you can do to make your Mac dramatically faster. However, like a mechanic tightening this and loosening that, you can do lots of little things that will speed up your Mac just a bit. Add these tweaks all together, and your system will indeed feel snappier.

Start with the software. There's only so much you can do to make OS X itself faster, but you can tweak individual applications to make them — and your system as a whole — feel more responsive.

Then there's hardware. Conventional wisdom says you can never have enough RAM. Well, as it turns out, you can: according to our lab tests, going from 256MB to 512MB will give most users a substantial speed boost, but going from 512MB to 1GB won't do as much.

Like we say, none of these things on its own will make your Mac a new machine. Take enough little steps, and pretty soon they'll add up to one big leap forward.



34 SOFTWARE SPEED-UPS

While OS X may be pretty well tuned for performance, individual applications aren't. You can tweak your apps in plenty of ways to make sure they're operating at top speed. Here are a few of our favourite tricks.



SAFARI

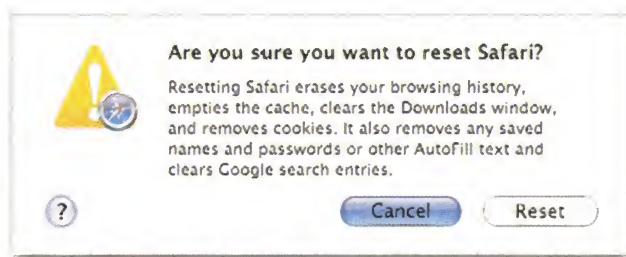
Less filling. Many of us tell Safari to remember form information so we don't have to. As with the cache, though, the resulting AutoFill lists can grow to an unwieldy size over time. To clean them up, choose Safari: Preferences, and then select the AutoFill pane. Once you're there, check to see whether User Names And Passwords or Other Forms is selected. If either one is, click on the Edit button next to it. Go through the resulting list, select any items you don't recognise or no longer need, and click on the Remove button. (I don't recommend clicking on Remove All, no matter how tempting it is.)

Forget your history. Safari remembers hundreds of web pages you've visited recently. (To see which ones, just go to the History menu.) But this list of visited sites can be a drag on your browser. To clear it, choose History: Clear History.

Clear favicons. Favicons – those tiny icons you often see in the address bar to the left of a URL – can help you identify a site quickly. If you visit enough sites that use them, they can accumulate and start bogging down your browser. To delete them, first quit Safari. Then locate your user folder/ Library/Safari/Icons and drag this folder to the Trash.

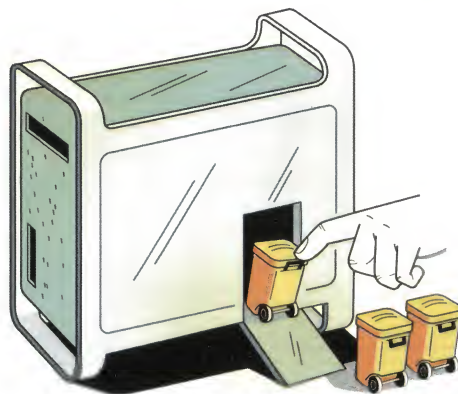
Reset Safari. If you'd rather not go through each of these tasks one at a time, you can take a more drastic step. Safari: Reset Safari will delete your caches, history, AutoFill entries, and cookies, though not your favicon or Java caches. Beware: you'll end up having to re-enter all your passwords and reconfigure your favourite web pages.

Fresh start. Resetting Safari can speed up your browser, but it can also get rid of some valuable information, such as stored names, passwords, and AutoFill text.



Empty your cache.

To reduce the time it takes to load pages and images, Safari stores previously viewed content in its cache. If this cache gets too big, performance can slow down as Safari sorts through it. To start over fresh and reduce those lookup times, choose Safari: Empty Cache (or press ⌘-option-E).

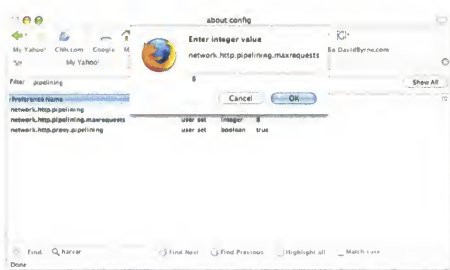


FIREFOX

Get the G5 version. If your Mac has a G5 processor, you can download a special version of Firefox that's optimised to get the best performance from your CPU (see "Hot links").

Optimise hidden settings. Firefox has hundreds of hidden settings you can see and adjust by typing about:config in the address bar and pressing return. For example, to increase the number of HTTP requests sent at one time, change the network.http.pipelining and network.http.proxy.pipelining values to true and set network.http.pipelining.maxrequests to 8. To eliminate the quarter-second delay before Firefox begins drawing a page, control-click (or right-click) anywhere on the page and choose New: Integer from the contextual menu. Enter nglayout.initialpaint.delay as the name and 0 as the value (see the screenshot "In the pipeline").

Reduce extensions. Firefox extensions are terrific – and terrifically easy to find and install. Installing too many of them, however, can slow down your browser. To winnow some of them



In the pipeline. You can speed up Firefox by tweaking a bunch of hidden network settings in the `about:config` window.

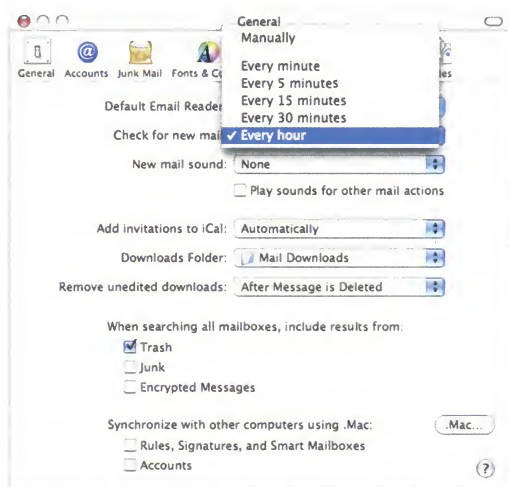
out, choose Tools: Extensions and look for any extensions you no longer use. Select them and click on Uninstall; then restart Firefox.



Reduce mailbox sizes. The more messages you have in a mailbox, the longer Mail will take to display it. If you have a mailbox with more than 1000 or so messages, consider splitting it into two or more smaller mailboxes. The inbox is especially sensitive to large numbers of messages, and more so with IMAP accounts than with POP ones. So make an effort to keep your inbox relatively clear by filing incoming messages as soon as possible.

Check mail less frequently. Mail always slows down a bit when checking messages, so if you set it to do so less often, it will feel faster. Choose Mail: Preferences, click on the General button in the toolbar, and choose a less frequent schedule from the Check For New Mail pop-up menu (see the screenshot "Patience, patience").

Check previous recipients. Mail maintains a list of everyone to whom you've sent a message, and it consults this list when you address new messages. If your Previous Recipients list gets too long, addressing can get pretty poky. Choose Window: Previous Recipients, select any address you don't use frequently, and click on Remove From List.



Patience, patience. You can speed up Mail by checking your mail less frequently; the less often Mail has to check mailboxes, the faster it'll feel.

Tweak IMAP settings. If you use IMAP to retrieve your e-mail messages, several additional settings may significantly affect Mail's speed.

> If you store Drafts, Junk, and Trash on the server, Mail can take some time to synchronise those mailboxes every time you connect. So consider storing those messages locally instead. To do so, choose Mail: Preferences, click on the Accounts button in the toolbar, and click on the Mailbox Behaviors tab. Remove check marks from the check boxes for message types you want to store locally. (You can do the same thing for sent messages, but the benefit of leaving them on the server may outweigh any performance penalty.)

> In the Advanced tab of the Accounts window, make sure the Automatically Synchronize Changed Mailboxes option is not selected.

Font fixes

Cleaning up your fonts can help keep all your applications running smoothly.

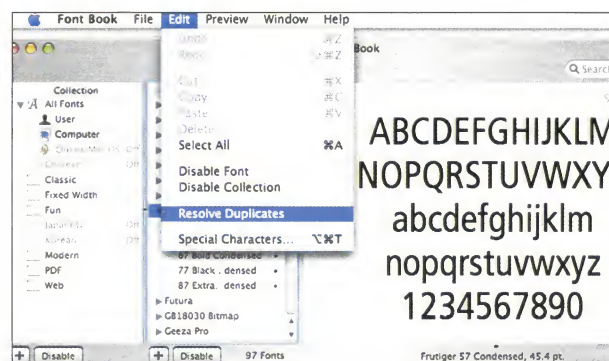
Zap duplicates. First, disable duplicate fonts — without removing them — by using Font Book (in /Applications). Look for fonts with a bullet (•) next to them; that indicates a duplicate. Select the font and choose Edit: Resolve Duplicates.

Weed out corruption. Next, select all the fonts in the Font list and choose File: Validate Fonts. Font Book displays a window with icons indicating each font's status. If a font contains errors, select it and click on the Remove Checked button.

Although Font Book can identify errors, it can't fix them. For that — and for more-extensive font testing — try a commercial utility such as Insider Software's FontAgent Pro or Morrison SoftDesign's FontDoctor (see "Hot links").

Cache out. OS X creates font caches in several locations. If OS X caches a damaged font, the cache will also contain errors and should be removed. The easiest way to find and remove font caches is to use Mark Douma's Font Finagler. First delete (or at least disable) any damaged fonts, and then run Font Finagler. After you delete your font caches, restart your Mac (see "Hot links").

Seeing double. Using Font Book to find and disable duplicate fonts can speed up your whole system.

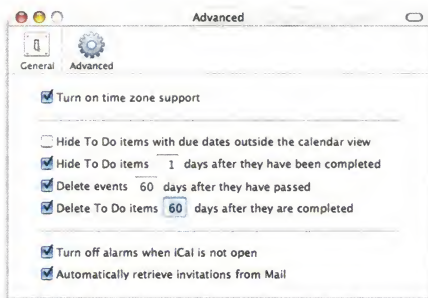




iCAL

Remove old events. Smaller calendars are generally zippier. If your calendar files are crammed, consider removing old items. To do so, save a copy of each calendar file by selecting it and choosing File: Export. Then choose iCal: Preferences, click on the Advanced button in the toolbar, and select the Delete Events _ Days After They Have Passed and Delete To Do Items _ Days After They Are Completed options, entering a number of days you're comfortable with (see the screenshot "Lean and mean"). The next time you open iCal, it will purge the old events from your calendar.

Reduce subscriptions. The more calendars you subscribe to, the longer it takes iCal to load each one. If you've subscribed



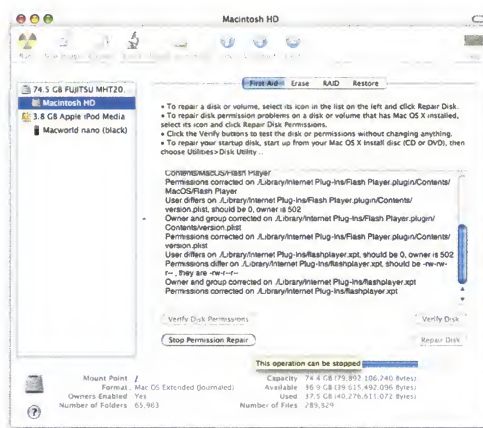
Lean and mean. Periodically and automatically purging old events from your iCal calendars will help them load — and feel — faster.

to large calendar files stored on other servers, updating can take quite a while. Try removing unneeded subscriptions or downloading the .ics files to your Mac, adding them to iCal, and updating them manually from time to time.



MICROSOFT OFFICE 2004

Turn off syncing. If you're a .Mac subscriber and you have iDisk Syncing set to Automatic, Office apps may take a long time to display Open and Save dialog boxes. To speed them up, go to the

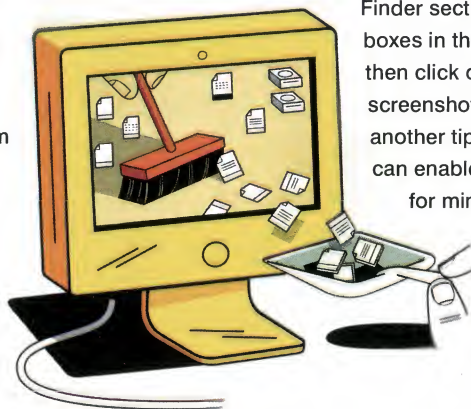


Permission granted. In the case of Office 2004, repairing permissions really can improve performance.

Top OS X tips

Want more speed from OS X? The operating system is pretty good at keeping itself in good shape, so there isn't actually a whole lot you can do to improve OS performance. You can, however, give it a few little boosts. None of these techniques will turn your aging G3/500MHz iBook into a new dual-G5 Power Mac — but every little bit helps.

Reduce desktop clutter. The desktop can be a great place to drop stuff, but because of the way OS X handles desktop icons, putting stuff there can also slow your system down. The operating system treats each desktop icon just like a full-size Finder window — the icon takes up a chunk of memory, and the system has to track its position and size at all times. Drop enough files and folders on your desktop, and you may start to notice side effects (such as spinning beach balls) when you're trying to do something as simple as open a new Finder window. Here's one simple way to cut down on the clutter (and system drag) without losing that handy storage place: create a folder or two on your desktop (call them Need To Look At and Things To Do, for example), and then move all the items from your desktop into the new folders.



Tweak the Finder. For machines with older video cards, disabling some of the Finder's visual animations (zoom effects, scrolling info panels, and so on) can provide a notable increase in speed. Although you can do this in Terminal, the easiest way is to install

Marcel Bresink's TinkerTool utility (see "Hot links"). In the Finder section, remove the check marks from all the boxes in the Animation Effects part of the page, and then click on the Relaunch Finder button (see the screenshot "Deanimate the animation"). Here's another tip: in the Dock section of TinkerTool, you can enable the Suck In effect, a third animation style for minimising windows. This is probably the fastest of the three (the other two are Scale and Genie), but it's available only in TinkerTool (or via Terminal).

Skip disk image verification. When you mount a disk image, OS X first verifies the disk's checksum to make sure that nobody has tampered with the data on the disk image. Theoretically, that step is important. But when you're dealing with disk images from trusted sources (which is most of the time, I hope), it's redundant. (In five years of OS X usage, I have yet to have a checksum test fail.) Thankfully, you can easily disable this feature. If you downloaded TinkerTool earlier, just look in the



Faster files. Turn off iDisk syncing, and Office 2004's Open and Save dialog boxes will open faster.

Mac preference pane's iDisk tab and either turn off syncing by clicking on the Stop button or select the Manually option to disable automatic synchronisation (see the screenshot "Faster files").

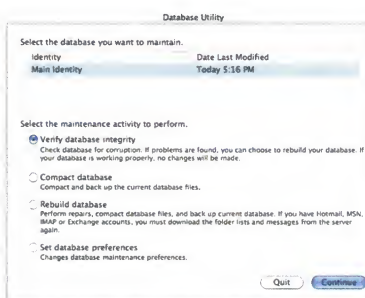
Repair permissions. Microsoft says that repairing permissions can correct certain Office 2004 performance problems. Open /Applications/Utilities/Disk Utility. Select your startup volume from the list on the left, click on the First Aid tab, and then click on the Repair Disk Permissions button (see the screenshot "Permission granted").

Fix fonts. Office maintains its own font cache, which can cause problems if damaged. To delete this cache, quit all Office 2004 applications and then drag the file /your user folder/Library/Preferences/Microsoft/Office Font Cache (11) to the Trash.

MICROSOFT ENTOURAGE

Rebuild the database. A damaged Entourage database file can lead to poor performance. To check on yours, first quit all Office 2004 apps. Then hold down the option key while launching Entourage to summon the Database Utility. Select the Verify Database Integrity option and click on Continue. If the utility reports errors, select Rebuild Database and click on Continue again (see the screenshot "Database rehab"). If you have IMAP or Exchange accounts, you'll have to re-download messages stored on those servers.

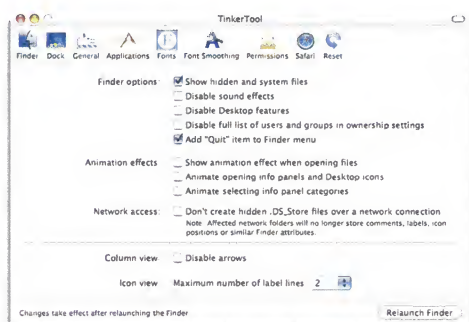
Take Entourage out of the Spotlight. Some users have found that if Spotlight attempts to index items in the Microsoft



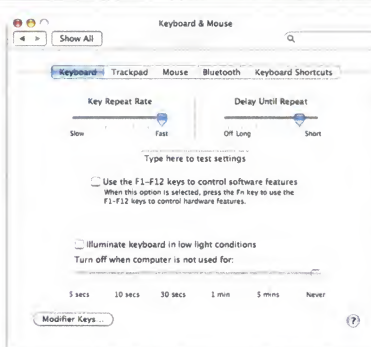
Database rehab. To fix a corrupted Entourage database, hold down the option key while Entourage is loading to launch the Database Utility.

Applications section and choose the Skip Checksum Verification When Opening DMG Files option. If you don't have TinkerTool, open Terminal and type `defaults write com.apple.frameworks.diskimages skip-verify true`. From then on, you won't see the checksum-verification progress box. To re-enable it, repeat the above command but change `true` to `false`.

Change the Dock animation. Open the Dock preference pane and change the Minimize Using pop-up menu to Scale Effect. (If you have TinkerTool, you can use that utility's Suck In effect, which is faster than Scale.) On many machines, especially those with slower video cards, you'll notice that windows minimise to the Dock much more smoothly when this effect is enabled. While you're in this preference pane, deselect the Animate Opening



Deanimate the animation. Although the Finder's various visual animations can be nice eye candy, they can also be real resource hogs. TinkerTool makes it easy to turn them off.



Improve your typing speed. When you increase the key repeat rate and decrease the delay before repeat, you can make your keyboard feel faster.

Applications option; when this option is turned off, you'll no longer have to waste time watching an application's icon bounce around before the app opens.

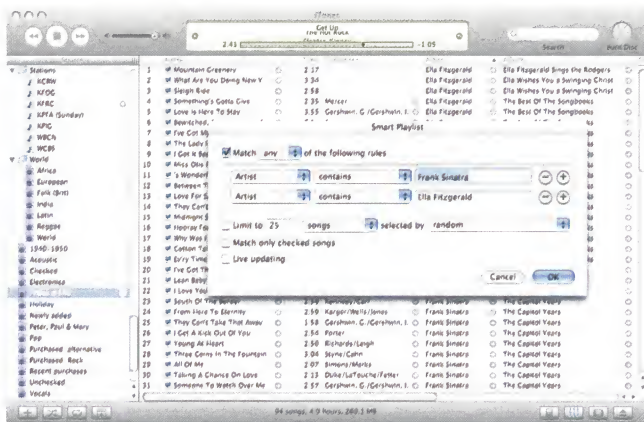
Speed up your keyboard. Switch over to the Keyboard & Mouse preference pane and open the Keyboard tab. Then set the Key Repeat Rate setting to Fast and move the Delay Until Repeat slider closer to the Short end of the bar (see the screenshot "Improve your typing speed"). Both of these changes will make your machine feel more responsive. For instance, text will disappear at a much quicker rate when you hold down the delete key. You can do a bit of experimenting to find the settings that work best with your typing style. — Rob Griffiths

User Data folder, it can adversely affect Entourage performance. To avoid this problem, open the Spotlight preference pane and click on the Privacy tab. Then drag the following folder into the resulting window: /your user folder/Documents/Microsoft User Data.



Dumber playlists. People who have lots of smart playlists often find that smart playlists can increase the amount of time iTunes takes to open or to display playlist content. Here's something to consider: some smart playlists (such as those whose criteria include Last Played or Date Added) change more than others (such as those based on artists you no longer actively collect). So you can speed up iTunes in the following two ways.

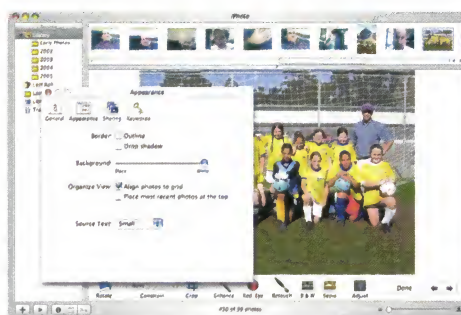
First, if a smart playlist doesn't change that much, select it, choose File: Edit Smart Playlist, and deselect the Live Updating option. Second, you can create a new, regular playlist, drag everything from one of your static smart playlists to it, and then delete the smart one (see the screenshot "Don't be smart").



Don't be smart. Smart playlists can actually slow iTunes down — so don't use them when you don't have to, and turn off live updating whenever you can.



Use default thumbnail sizes. iPhoto automatically creates thumbnails of each of your images in several standard sizes. If you use the size slider at the bottom of the window to choose a non-standard size, iPhoto has to rescale all the images on-the-fly — which can slow the program down slightly when you're opening a photo library or scrolling. To choose one of the preset sizes in browse mode, press 0 for small thumbnails, 2 for medium, or 1 for large (and yes, you read those numbers correctly, even though they seem to be out of order).



Out of the shadows. While iPhoto's drop-shadow borders look cool when you're browsing albums, they can also slow down the app.

Turn off shadows. By default, iPhoto adds a drop shadow to each photo in browse mode. On Macs with slower processors or graphics cards, the extra processing required to display those shadows can slow things down. To turn off the shadows, choose iPhoto: Preferences, click on the Appearance button in the toolbar, and deselect the Drop Shadow option (see the screenshot "Out of the shadows").

Collapse the rolls. If you view your photos by roll (View: Sort Photos: By Film Roll), you can help iPhoto open more quickly by collapsing each roll so that only the title and date show. To do so, click on the disclosure triangle next to a roll title to collapse or expand just that one roll; option-click on the triangle to collapse or expand all your film rolls at once. If you leave them that way when you quit iPhoto, it will open and scroll more quickly next time.

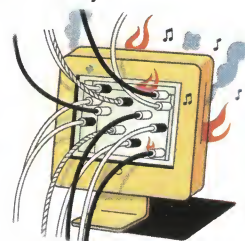
Split your library. If you have thousands of photos, consider splitting your collection into multiple, smaller libraries. With fewer photos open at a time, iPhoto will be much peppier.

To split your library and switch between libraries, use a tool such as Rick Neil's iPhoto Buddy or Brian Webster's iPhoto Library Manager (see "Hot links").

Empty your Trash. iPhoto uses its own internal Trash to hold deleted photos. You can free up disk space and give iPhoto fewer things to keep track of by emptying its Trash periodically. To do so, choose iPhoto: Empty Trash.

Check your plug-ins.

If you have any third-party iTunes plug-ins installed, make sure you have up-to-date versions. If iTunes is particularly unresponsive, you might also try disabling plug-ins temporarily. To do so, first quit iTunes. Then look in /your user folder/Library/ iTunes/iTunes Plug-Ins or /Library/ iTunes/iTunes Plug-Ins, and drag any files inside those folders to the desktop. Relaunch iTunes; if the problem goes away, you'll know that one or more plug-ins was at fault. You can then add them back one at a time to discover the culprit.



UPGRADING RAM: FAQs

When it comes to upgrading your Mac, RAM is the easy choice. It's inexpensive, it's relatively easy to install, and it can make a noticeable difference. As a quick visit to just about any Mac forum will tell you, though, RAM upgrades can also be horrifically frustrating. Here's how to do it right.

Why would I need more RAM? The first step in upgrading your RAM is to decide whether you need to do so at all. Upgrading RAM doesn't necessarily help apps run faster (see the sidebar "Bang for your RAM buck"), but it can speed up the processes of opening or switching between apps — something some of us do several times a minute. If those processes feel faster, so will your overall computing experience.

The reason for this is that OS X swaps apps and documents in and out of memory all the time. When the programs you're running require more RAM than you've got, OS X moves programs that aren't doing anything at the moment from active memory to temporary swap files on your hard drive, to make RAM available for the apps you're really using.

Let's say you have Photoshop and Mail running at the same time. Photoshop already has some memory allocated to it. If you open a large photo in Photoshop that won't fit in your available RAM, Photoshop will request more memory from OS X. Looking for memory from somewhere, the OS will recognise that you haven't used Mail in a while and will copy (or "page out") Mail's memory contents to your hard drive. That RAM is now free, and OS X can allocate it to Photoshop and load your photo.

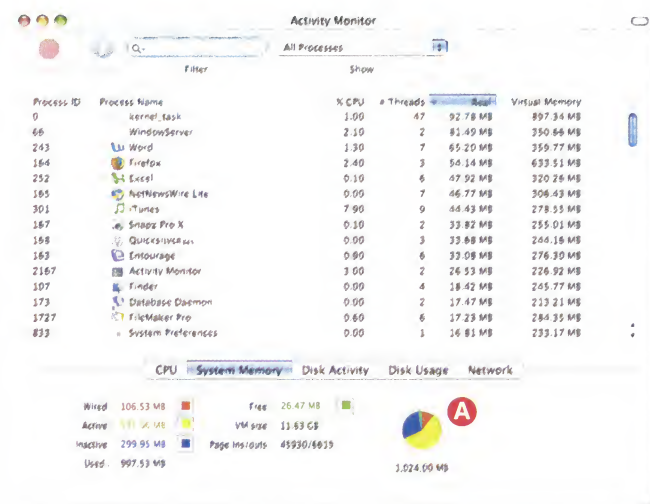
The colours of RAM. Activity Monitor is a great way to keep track of what applications are using your RAM (and whether it's overtaxed), but what exactly does that pie-chart A mean?

Wired (red). Contents that must remain in physical RAM and can't be paged out to disk.

Active (yellow). Processes using memory right now.

Free (green). Memory available for allocation.

Inactive (blue). Memory allocated to an open program but not in use at the moment.



Paging out is slick, but there's a catch — copying memory to disk is slow. A fast hard drive can write about 20MB per second. DDR2 RAM has throughput of up to 4GB per second. So as soon as you start using virtual memory instead of RAM, memory access times slow way down.

Let's say you decide to check your e-mail. OS X previously paged Mail out to disk, and you've been using Photoshop. When you click on Mail in the Dock, the OS has to load it back into

Bang for your RAM buck

To find out what impact additional RAM has on performance, we tested two Macs: a 1.42GHz Mac mini with 256MB of RAM, and a 1.8GHz Power Mac G5 with 512MB. We then upgraded them both (the mini to 512MB and then 1GB, the Power Mac to 1GB) and retested. To simulate real-world conditions, we tested with several apps open: iTunes playing songs from its library, Firefox displaying Apple's home page, Entourage with a well-populated inbox, Photoshop with a 50MB file open, and iMovie running a tutorial. We then ran both the Photoshop and Firefox portions of our Speedmark test suite.

We did find a dramatic performance boost when we upgraded the Mac mini's stock 256MB of RAM to 512MB, but while doubling the RAM from 512MB to 1GB also goosed performance in both tests on both systems, the improvement was not as dramatic. The Photoshop test ran about 12 percent faster after going from 512MB to 1GB on both Macs. In Firefox, the Power Mac completed the test 27 percent faster after its upgrade; the Mac mini, 30 percent faster. — James Galbraith

	Photoshop	Firefox
Power Mac 1.8GHz		
512MB	1:49	2:52
1024MB	1:36	2:06
Mac Mini 1.42GHz		
256MB	7:36	6:58
512MB	2:18	3:40
1024MB	2:03	2:35
	<Better	<Better

All scores are in minutes:seconds. For each test the following five applications were open and running: iTunes, iMovie, Mozilla Firefox, Adobe Photoshop, and Microsoft Entourage. The Photoshop test is a set of 14 scripted tasks using a 50MB file. We set Photoshop's memory to 70 percent and History to Minimum. The Firefox suite downloads multiple tabbed web pages from a local server with disk cache set to zero. —MACWORLD LAB TESTING BY JAMES GALBRAITH AND JERRY JUNG

physical RAM and load that photo into virtual memory on your drive. This process could take a second or two, resulting in that dreadful spinning beach ball.

How do I know if I need more RAM? The simplest way to find out whether you're overloading your RAM is with OS X's Activity Monitor. Open it up and click on the System Memory tab (see the screenshot "The colours of RAM"). If the pie chart is mostly green and blue (representing free and inactive memory, respectively), then you're in good shape. If the chart is mostly yellow and red (active and wired), then you're running out of RAM and may experience slowdowns.

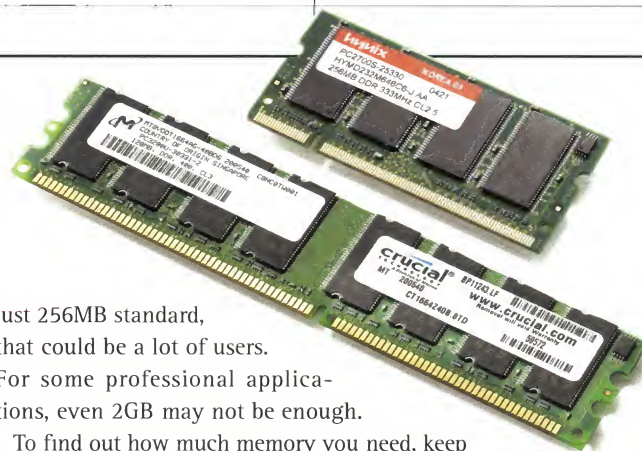
Watch the Page Ins/Outs numbers. If page outs are increasing continually, you need more RAM.

How much RAM do I need? As you can probably guess, the amount of memory you need depends heavily on which apps you use daily. Most Tiger users should have at least 512MB; given the number of Macs that Apple has shipped over the years with

just 256MB standard, that could be a lot of users. For some professional applications, even 2GB may not be enough.

To find out how much memory you need, keep an eye on Activity Monitor for a day or so. If the free RAM reported by Activity Monitor is less than ten percent of your physical RAM under a typical workload of apps and documents, you need to increase your RAM until those numbers are more in line. For example, if you have 1GB of RAM installed, and Activity Monitor consistently reports that you have less than 100MB of RAM free, you're a good candidate for an upgrade.

Then there's the question of how much RAM your system can take. That, in turn, depends on how much RAM you have installed



Is your memory bad?

Congratulations. You just installed a new memory module in your Mac. Your computer's RAM is now double what it was yesterday and it's running faster than ever. The only problem is that it also crashes periodically and documents get mysteriously corrupted. You suspect a defective module is the culprit. How can you be certain?

For starters, confirm that the memory you installed is (a) alive and kicking and (b) the right type of RAM for your Mac. Happily, checking both of these things is a snap.

Is it alive? First, select About This Mac from the Apple menu and see how much memory it reports. If it's not the amount you expect, your new RAM module is dead or you didn't install it properly. To find out which is the case, go through the installation again, making certain that the module clicked into its slot properly. If it did and the memory still doesn't register, you probably have a defective module.

If the amount of RAM seems correct, open System Profiler (select About This Mac from the Apple menu and then click on the More Info button). In the Contents pane, select Hardware: Memory. In the right pane, you should see a list of all your installed memory.

Check the Size, Type, and Speed columns. Make sure these specs match those of the RAM you intended to buy. To confirm that this type of RAM will work with your system, check your Mac's documentation or use MacTracker.

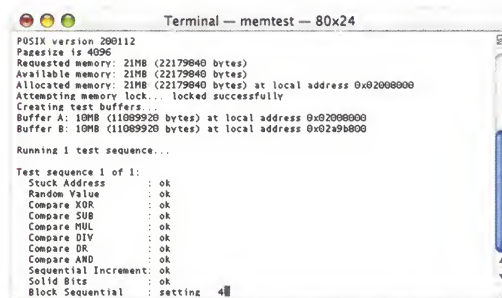
Ah, but what if your Mac won't start? In that case, pay attention to the startup sounds when you turn on the Mac. Unusual beeps instead of the normal startup tone likely mean defective memory. For details, borrow someone else's Mac and check out Apple's Knowledge Base article on "Startup setbacks" (see "Hot links").

On again, off again. If all the specs check out, you may have the dreaded intermittent-memory problem — your memory module is weak but not dead. It works fine most of the time but has occasional hiccups. A hiccup at a particularly bad moment can result in anything from a corrupted document to a system crash.

What makes these problems so infuriating is that they're so hard to diagnose. You have to wait for the next hiccup, which could be minutes or days away. Still, even with intermittent-memory problems, you aren't helpless. Here are the things you can do:

> Remove the memory you just installed (and reinstall any modules you took out to make way for the new memory). Wait a few days. If the symptoms disappear, a memory problem was the likely cause.

> Get out the disc(s) that came with your Mac and look for the Apple Hardware Test. With recent Macs, it's on the Install and Restore DVD. With older Macs, it's on a separate Hardware Test CD. To access Apple Hardware Test from the DVD, insert the DVD and restart your Mac while holding down the option key. A screen will appear, listing all bootable volumes. One of them should be named Apple Hardware Test. Select it and click on the right-arrow



Emergency test. If you can't even boot into OS X, try running Tony Scaminaci's Memtest from the special single-user startup mode.

now, what configuration it's installed in, and how many slots you have available. Let's say, for example, that you have one of the original first-generation iMac G5s, which shipped with 256MB of RAM. They also came with two RAM slots, to which you can add up to 1GB of RAM each. Assuming you don't want to toss that original 256MB, that means you can upgrade to 1.25GB.

For more details, download MacTracker (see "Hot links"); this useful utility provides detailed tech specs for every Mac model ever produced (see the screenshot "Track down your Mac").

What kind of RAM do I need? So you've decided that you need more RAM. The next step is figuring out what kind of RAM your system takes.

The simplest way to find out is to open up System Profiler. In OS X 10.3 and later, open the Apple menu, select About This Mac, and click on the More Info button. (In OS X 10.0 through 10.2, go to Applications/Utilities and launch System Profiler.) Under Hardware, select Memory. That should give you all the information you need.

button to launch the utility. You will have a choice of a Quick Test or an Extended Test. Choose Extended Test.

One advantage of Hardware Test is that you can use it even if you can't launch OS X. If your intermittent problem is intermittent enough, however, Hardware Test may not test long enough to detect it.

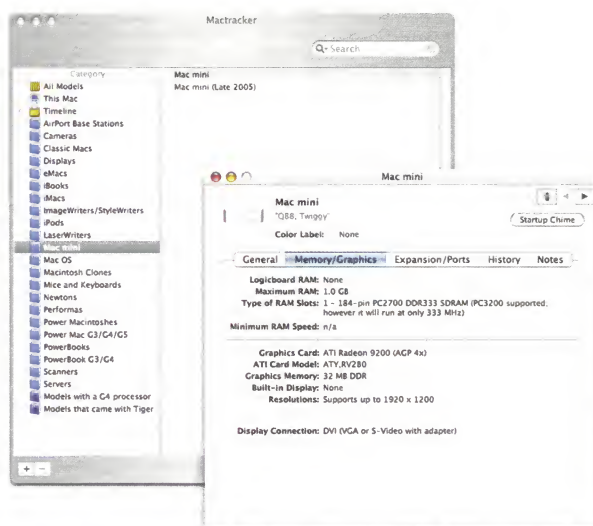
> For the final word, get KelleyComputing's Rember (see "Hot links"). This utility can test your memory for any length of time. Enable its Infinite option, and it will test forever (or until you click on Stop). This allows you to run a test that lasts for days. After stopping, check the log output to see if it found any errors.

Non-starting Macs. The only problem with Rember is that you can't use it if you can't start up in OS X. One solution is Tony Scamini's Memtest (see "Hot links"), a Unix command typically run from Terminal. (Rember is actually just a graphical front end for Memtest.) The advantage of Memtest is that you can run it from single-user mode, a special startup mode (accessed by holding down \mathbb{H} -S at startup) that may work even if your Mac can't successfully start OS X.

Single-user mode offers another advantage: it allows you to test more of your memory. That's because Memtest is unable to assess memory that's currently in use by other software. After a normal startup (and a launch of Terminal), the memory accessed by the Finder and Terminal would be off-limits to Memtest.

To run Memtest in single-user mode (assuming it's already installed), type `/Applications/memtest/memtest all 3 - 1` (check the user guide that comes with the software for more details). You can stop the test at any time by pressing control-C.

If any of the above paths indicates a defective memory module, contact the company where you purchased it and ask for a replacement. — Ted Landau



Track down your Mac. The MacTracker utility can tell you the specs of any Mac (or any other hardware product Apple has ever made, for that matter).

Memory slot. This specifies the form factor of the RAM your system uses. Most desktop Macs use DIMMs (Dual In-line Memory Modules), while Mac laptops and some early iMacs take SODIMMs (Small Outline DIMMs).

Size. This is, logically enough, the capacity of the RAM you have installed now. Consult MacTracker's Memory/Graphics tab to find out how much RAM your Mac is able to accept.

Type. Until recently, Macs used DDR (double data rate) RAM. The latest Power Macs and iMacs use DDR2 memory.

Speed. The number that comes after the letters PC refers to the RAM's bus speed. It's a common misconception that faster RAM will make your computer faster. It won't. Some faster RAM chips will work in computers that shipped with slower memory (for example, PC2700 chips will work in PC2100 Power Mac G4s). While you can often add faster memory to systems that use a slower type, doing so won't provide any speed improvements. The computer will run the PC2700 memory at the same speed that it runs PC2100 at.

Where should I buy RAM? Bargain-basement PC retailers may offer RAM that will work in your Mac — but I wouldn't advise buying from those sources. Macs tend to be pickier about good RAM than PCs, and OS X is particularly picky. (OS 9 tolerated some hardware defects that OS X's memory-management system will reject.) Bad RAM can lead to kernel panics and random application crashes.

It's best to buy RAM from Mac-specific companies. Even within the Mac community, it's important that you buy RAM with a lifetime warranty.

How do I install it? I can't give directions for installing RAM on every Mac out there. Fortunately, you can find that information online. Apple has instructions for installing RAM on many of its desktops; search for RAM and your Mac type at apple.com/support. My company offers online instructions for replacing RAM in your laptop or your Mac mini (see "Hot links").



What on Earth is Google doing?

GOOGLE certainly has no shortage of surprises up its sleeve, which is no surprise in itself, since it has been busily buying up information and technologies from the \$US 7billion spoils of two public offerings on the US stock market.

One of the biggest surprises was the addition of satellite photography to its roadmaps subsite, but more surprising again was the acquisition of a company called Keyhole that made interactive earth viewing software, piecing together satellite photos into a 3D globe.

With the Keyhole software (now renamed Google Earth) PC users could spin the globe and zoom in on any point. In some areas the imagery was incredibly high quality: it was possible to see the line-markings between cars in car parks.

Now it has been released for Mac, too. "We're happy to finally have some good news for the, ahem, vocal Mac enthusiasts we've been hearing from," wrote Chikai Ohazama from the Google Earth team on the official Google Blog. "Let's just say that we have gotten more than a few 'requests' for a Mac version of Google Earth."

However, it appears that the wait has been worth it. When it was initially released, the quality of satellite photographs in many places outside the US wasn't very good. However, in recent months, Google has been pouring money into buying high-resolution images of places of interest all round the world, including large expanses of Australian cities.

The real magic is the way Google Earth uses your internet connection. Before the net, distributing a program of this scale would have been impossible: the satellite imagery runs into hundreds of gigabytes of data. The Google Earth software doesn't come with any imagery: it downloads the satellite pics as you navigate your way around the world, zooming in and out. As long as you have a reasonable broadband connection (512Kbps and above), it works amazingly smoothly.

For many users, Google Earth is one of the most interesting bits of internet-connected software they've ever used on a computer. MacUpdate.com user Mark Cairns writes: "10th January, 2006 will go down in the history as the day we'll all look back on in 20 years and say 'How on (Google) Earth did we ever live without this Killer App' before then?"

Beyond the simple genius of allowing users to view the world from a bird's eye perspective, Google is also thinking "beyond the atlas" and harnessing user participation in a way that the cartography world has never seen before. Users can create pointers to places of interest and then share them with all the other Google Earth users. These



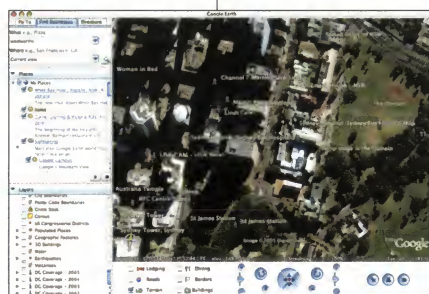
Hot Links

earth.google.com/download-earth.html
Google Earth
googlesightseeing.com/
Google Sightseeing
bbs.keyhole.com
Google Earth Community
www.juicygeography.co.uk/googleearth.htm
Juicy Geography (useful how-tos)
mobile.google.com/personalized
Personalised Mobile Google

"Google Earth Community Layers" run from the monumental to the mundane: from "huge and unique" landmarks to every instance of a commercial jumbo jet frozen in time in a satellite photo. And yes, if you're hungry, you can easily find out where the nearest KFC (or Paul Bocus restaurant) is — by satellite.

Mobile Google. It's nothing to do with Google Earth, but too good to resist mentioning. Google now offers its personalised homepage for mobile phone users. As long as your phone has a simple web browser,

you can navigate to Google.com, sign in with your Google account, and view news feeds from web sites you've set up for your full-blown Personalised Google page, and recent e-mails in your Gmail inbox. Set it as your phone's web browser home page and web browsing on a mobile suddenly becomes useful. Even better, because Google is doing all the sending and receiving at the server-end, you save on expensive mobile data charges. ☺



You are where?

How to add your own placemarks to Google Earth Community:

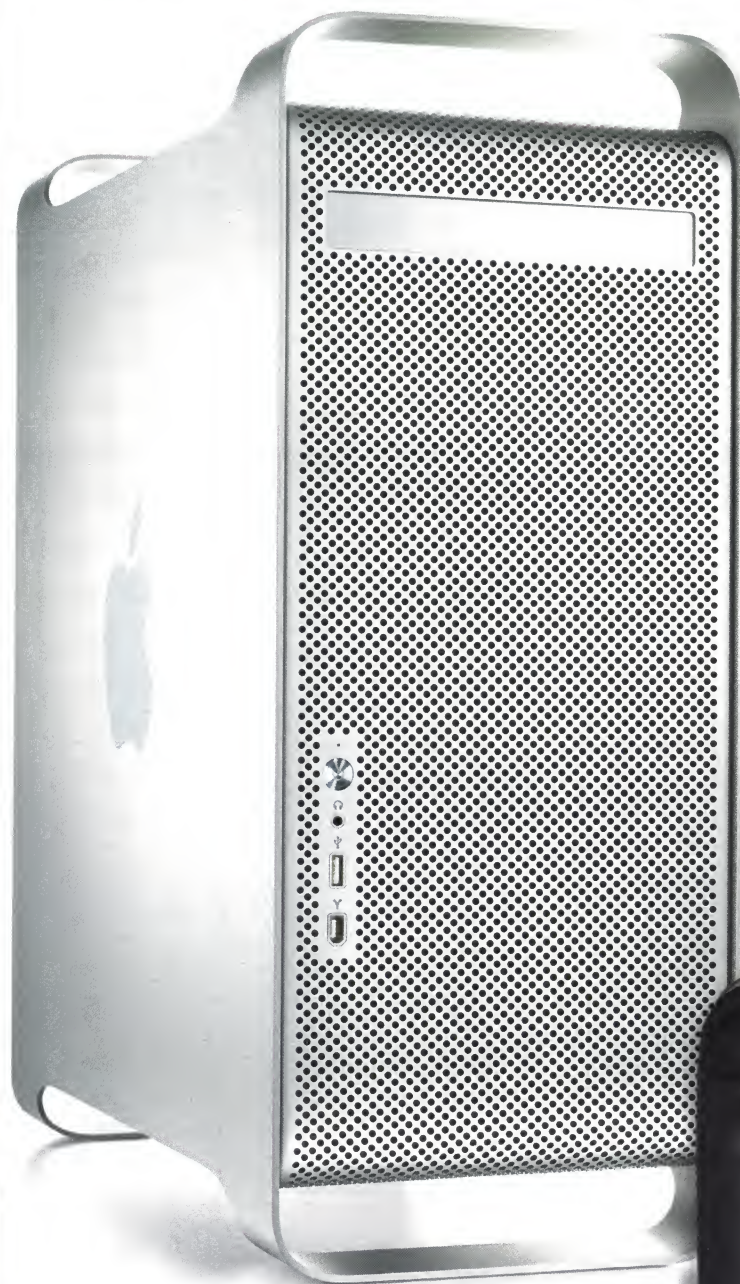
1. Find your location in Google Earth for Mac OS X.
2. Left click the drawing pin icon on the bottom right of the Google Earth window.
3. In the popup menu, select "New Placemark".
4. Give your placemark a name. Make sure you add a description as well, or Google won't accept your placemark. Click OK.
6. Right click (or Ctrl-click) on your saved item in the "my places" category on the left side of the screen.
7. Select "share with Google Earth Community".
8. A wizard in your web browser will take you through the steps of registering for the Google Earth Community and create an account or login.
9. Find the appropriate section in the message board (Earth Browser is the category for places that aren't a special landmark).
10. Google will make your placemaker available to other users within about a month.

Dan Warne is passionate about the state of broadband in Australia.

03.2006

The Hub

YOUR DIGITAL LIFESTYLE



**BEAM ME UP:
PHOTOGRAPHY
WITHOUT
WIRES**



iPOD NANO ACCESSORIES | ALL ABOUT BLACKBERRY | HOW TO GET A JOB IN VIDEO

By Philip Lucas



Hot Links

www.canon.com.au
IXUS wireless
www.kodak.com.au
EasyShare-one
www.maxwell.com.au
CoolPix

No wires attached

THE Mac is not the be-all and end-all of the digital hub, particularly as the iPod has been developed into a bit of digital hub device in its own right. The Mac and the iPod, while still essentially the cornerstone of the digital hub, have a significant threat to their primacy in the digital hub, in the guise of wireless products.

For some time now, it has been possible to print your digital photographs without the need for your Mac. With innovations such as PictBridge (for direct camera connection) and built-in media readers, you've been able to get your photos on paper without turning on your Mac. It has even been possible to do this wirelessly, though at some cost. It's only been in the last few months, in fact, that digital cameras with built-in wireless technologies have been making it onto the market at a price point that's accessible to most consumers. And on the printing side, there's also been some progress, with some companies releasing 802.11b and Bluetooth wireless adapters that connect directly into printers.

Photos want to be free. If you're looking for a wireless digital camera, you might already be carrying one. That's right, many mobile phones these days sport a digital camera of some sort, and some of these come with

Bluetooth wireless connectivity. Sure, the resolution, generally, isn't great, but it's a start.

For this article, I'll be focusing on products that are digital cameras primarily and feature some sort of wireless data transport system.

First cab off the rank in the compact digital market is Canon's IXUS Wireless digital camera system. The IXUS Wireless incorporates an 802.11b-compatible wireless network adapter. This enables the camera to easily connect to 802.11-enabled Macs and printers for image transfer or direct printing. To help sweeten the deal, Canon Australia includes a WA-1E Wireless Printer Adapter in the box.

As the name suggests, the WA-1E adapter is able to make a PictBridge compatible printer operate without connecting to your Mac. The device plugs directly into the PictBridge port on the printer, and away you go. Canon Australia informs me that the WA-1E will connect directly to any printer with a powered PictBridge-enabled USB port without the need for any additional power connection.

Unfortunately, if your PictBridge printer doesn't have a powered port, you'll need to plug DC power into the WA-1E in order for it to work. Canon says that the WA-1E should work with PictBridge-compatible printers, but that it can only really make guarantees for Canon's own PictBridge-enabled printers.

All in all, the tiny Canon IXUS Wireless weighs just 130g (without batteries) and features a 3x optical zoom, along with a five-megapixel maximum resolution (2592x1944). While this camera comes with 16MB of internal memory, it's easy enough to boost that with SD

or MMC memory. However, perhaps the most intriguing feature of the new IXUS Wireless camera is the fact that you're able to do wireless PC-controlled shooting. Unfortunately, at this stage, it's a Windows-only feature, although Canon has suggested that Mac support may become available later in the year.

As of press time, there was no retail price set for the Canon IXUS Wireless, though it should be on the shelves by the time you read this. For more info, contact Canon Australia on 1800 021 167.

Another important camera in this new generation of wireless digital compact cameras is Kodak's EasyShare-one, a camera we had a brief look at in the Hub a few months ago. Perhaps its really great defining feature is the fact that it can connect to Telstra Wireless Hotspots, thus enabling users to access Kodak's EasyShare Gallery service. Users connecting to this service can upload their images (or videos) and share them online. Kodak indicates that there are 850 Telstra Wireless Hotspots around Australia and the EasyShare-one should be able to access all of them.

(Of course, it should be able to connect to any 802.11b or 802.11g network, so don't worry about having to leave your home AirPort network to go find a Telstra hotspot.)

The 802.11b-capable EasyShare-one is also able to connect to printers that feature a suitable wireless connection. Kodak offers an optional \$170 Wi-Fi Card for its EasyShare Photo Printer 500 (available for around \$350) that allows users to print photos wirelessly from their EasyShare-one digital camera.

The EasyShare-one camera itself comes with a four-megapixel image sensor (up to 2304x1728), and incorporates a 3x optical zoom. Loaded with 256MB of memory as standard, there's plenty of room to store up



Featherweight contender. The 12.8-megapixel EOS-5D is surprisingly compact and light for such a heavy-hitting camera with a full-sized image sensor.



Safety in numbers. Canon's feature-packed WFT-E1 wireless transfer adapter comes with loads of security features.

loads of photos. A neat-looking three-inch swivelling LCD screen on the back makes this a great camera for the point-and-clicker. Priced at \$899, the Kodak EasyShare-one will take a chunk out of your wallet, but it does pack wireless connectivity (including access to Kodak's EasyShare Gallery) as well as a lot of memory, so your money goes to a good cause. Further details are available from Kodak on 1800 147 701.

The last picks in the wireless compact digital camera stakes are a moderately dynamic duo from Nikon, which I also took a peek at a couple of months ago. The Nikon Coolpix P1 and P2 are two peas in a pod, more or less. They both sport similar form factors and come with similar 3.5x optical zoom lenses, and they also come with 802.11b/g-compatible wireless adapters built in, making them both able to connect to a wireless Mac or printer. What separates the two cameras is resolution and memory, with the five-megapixel (up to 2594x1966) Coolpix P2 coming with just 16MB of storage, and the eight-megapixel (up to 3264x2450) Coolpix P1 loaded with a slightly more respectable 32MB. At just \$649 and \$799 respectively, the Nikon Coolpix P2 and P1 represent pretty good value for wireless digital still cameras, particularly as they incorporate Nikon's fairly advanced scene modes and auto-focus technologies. Contact Maxwell on 1300 366 499 if you want to know more.

Something for the pros. It should probably come as no surprise that both Nikon and Canon are leading the way in the development of wireless technology for professional-level digital SLR cameras. In this regard, Nikon has been surging ahead for some time, releasing the first version of its digital SLR wireless transfer adapter, the WT-1, back in July, 2003.

Nevertheless, Canon hasn't been caught napping, and it provides a wireless adapter that will support both Canon's EOS-5D and the top-of-the-line EOS-1Ds Mark II. The WFT-E1 attaches to the bottom of these Canon cameras and plugs straight into either camera, allowing you to connect to any 802.11 network. For those wanting make sure their images aren't free to the world, the WFT-E1 comes with support for security and authentication/encryption protocols, including WEP (Wired Equivalent Privacy), TKIP (Temporal Key Integrity Protocol) and MAC address filtering, as well as SSID (Service Set Identifier) for gaining access to closed networks. As well as featuring wireless network connectivity, the WFT-E1 incorporates an RJ-45 Ethernet port, that enables users to connect the camera directly to a wired network (or Mac), if you so choose. Priced at \$2099, the WFT-E1 might seem like costly accessory, but considering the price of the

cameras it works with, the extra expense is minimal and well worth it.

As noted the above, the WFT-E1 can attach to Canon's EOS-5D, which is right near the top of Canon's range of digital SLRs. Weighing in at a surprisingly light 810g and measuring no more than a standard SLR, the EOS-5D boasts an impressive 12.8-megapixel, full-sized CMOS image sensor, capable of producing images up to 4368x2912 resolution. Unlike with most digital SLRs, which usually feature a 2/3 image sensor, the EOS-5D is able to use lenses at their 35mm-film focal length, a useful feature if you're using legacy lenses and you want the same capability that you've always had with them.

If you're in need of a decent burst mode, then the EOS-5D's 3fps for up to 60 images (fine JPEG) in a row should be able to fulfil your needs. But perhaps the most interesting feature of the EOS-5D mode is the

Bridge over troubled ... air? Canon's Digital IXUS Wireless comes with a wireless print adapter for connecting to PictBridge-enabled printers.



Picture Style capability. At its core, it's much like the scene modes found on many compact digital cameras, but with a lot more subtlety and processing power. These Picture Styles include settings for standard shooting, portraits (more natural skin tones), landscapes (vivid blues and greens), neutral shots, "faithful" shots (colour reproduction that matches the original as closely as possible, and monochrome (black and white or sepia). Backed up by a lightning-fast shutter capable of shooting at up to 1/8000th of a second, a nine-point auto-focus and a large ISO range (100-1600/3200), the EOS-5 should be able to handle pretty much any photographic situation.

Costing \$5499, the EOS-5D is not for everyone, but it represents a great investment for serious professional photographers.

If the EOS-5D still hasn't got what you need, then maybe you should consider the truly impressive Canon EOS-1Ds Mark II. Coming with an equally impressive price tag of \$13,999 (body only), the EOS-1Ds Mark II features a truly astonishing 16.7-megapixel (4992x3328), full-sized image sensor, making it one of the highest resolution digital SLRs ever made. The burst mode on this camera is capable of shooting at 4fps for just 32 (fine JPEG) shots in a row, but considering those are at full resolution, that's still remarkable.

The EOS-1Ds Mark II works with the Canon WFT-E1, so it's fortunate that the WFT-E1 supports 802.11g as it will have a lot of data to push around. With a myriad of features and controls, the EOS-1Ds Mark II is ideal for all types of commercial photography, and its 45-point auto-focus system makes it an awesome tool to take into the field as well. Mind you, this camera weighs in at roughly 1.5kg, and that's with only the body and battery, so you might need to develop some muscles (or get a rock-solid tripod) to use it on location.

Look, Ma, no cable! The latest version of Nikon's wireless adapter for digital SLRs is the WT-2 (roughly the same price as the Canon WFT-E1), and it's the basis for Nikon's wireless strategy for its professional digital SLRs. What sets Nikon's WT-2 apart from Canon's rival WFT-E1 is the

inclusion of the company's Nikon Capture software. With this software, Mac users are able to remotely control a Nikon digital camera that supports the WT-2 — the D2Hs and the D2X — directly from their Mac.

A few years ago, I was involved on a shoot for a cinema commercial which used high-resolution digital still images. We were using a medium-format camera with a digital back, and it was all hooked up via FireWire to a Blue and White G3 sitting on a trolley/road case with an Apple LCD display attached. While it was all bundled on a sturdy platform, it was a pain in the neck to find a power outlet to get the most out of this system. One advantage to this set-up was that photos could be shot remotely and an accurate idea of how the pic came out was represented on a full-sized display, instead of just the one on the back of the camera.

These days, thanks to Nikon's WT-2, a supported Nikon digital SLR and the Nikon Capture software, the same thing can be achieved with a camera and a PowerBook, with no wires attached.

Nikon's D2Hs is one of the cameras that operates with the WT-2, and it's one of the most interesting digital SLRs on the market. Priced at around \$5599, the D2Hs is roughly the same price as Canon's EOS-5D, but rather than focusing on resolution, the D2Hs is aimed at fast-paced photography. While the D2Hs only has a resolution of 4.1 megapixels (2464x1632), it's capable of an astounding 8fps at full resolution for up to 50 frames. According to Nikon, the emphasis with the D2Hs is to keep the resolution down, but improve image quality and speed, making it very useful for photographers looking to get the right image quickly. More importantly, there's a market out there for photographers who don't need to go out to print (such as for the web), or don't need to print in such high resolutions (magazine or newspaper articles, for instance). It's a bold choice for such a pricey camera, but there's definitely a market for it.

If you're wanting that remote shooting capability combined with a high-resolution camera, then perhaps Nikon's D2X is more what

you're looking for. Available from some retailers for as little as \$6899, the 12.8-megapixel (4288x2848) D2X is no slouch in the speed department either. In full-resolution mode, the D2X can shoot at up to 5fps, while in a cropped mode (6.8 megapixels), it can shoot at up to 8fps. Featuring 11 auto-focus zones, the D2X should have more than enough grunt to take whatever you need, wherever you need to. The Nikon D2X might not have the same numbers as Canon's EOS-1Ds Mark II, but then it is half the price.

The last word. Wireless image transfer technology has certainly come a long way in the last year or so, but it will be interesting to see how things develop in the next year to come. While there's certainly a few products on the market, it's still early days for 802.11 in consumer digital cameras. It's worth remembering what a big deal Bluetooth was when it first appeared on a digital compact camera. Now it's a distant memory. Bluetooth has a place, but it's the digital cameras on mobile phones that are using that, not the compact digitals. On the printing side, Bluetooth may be gaining wider support (for those mobile phone cameras), but Wi-Fi is developing a stronger install base. It'll be interesting to see what happens with this. Stay tuned. ☞

So many pixels. Few cameras pack as many pixels as Canon's EOS-1Ds Mark II.



New iPod Accessories from Try & Byte

Kensington SX 2000 Speakers for iPod®

Compatible with any iPod with dock connector including iPod nano and iPod with video

At home or in the office, the Kensington SX 2000 Speakers for iPod do something that other similar speakers can't. Thanks to NXT's advanced SurfaceSound® flat panel speaker technology, they deliver clearly superior bass and sound balance from both sides of the unit. And unlike other similar speakers, they have the power to crank up the volume without losing sound quality! The Universal Dock provides a single, elegant way to connect any iPod with dock connector to your speakers. Your iPod fits into the Universal Dock through interchangeable Dock Adapters.

Features

- * Produces superior frequency response (better highs & lows) at higher volume than similar speaker systems.
- * Plays audio from other MP3 players, computers, etc.
- * Recharges your iPod or iPod mini while playing
- * Easy-access buttons control your iPod's power on/off and volume up / down.
- * Also plays audio from iPod shuffle, as well as any other audio source (MP3 players, computers) through a standard 3.5mm headphone jack (cable not included).



Kensington

\$190

Kensington Stereo Dock for iPod®

Let iPod Tunes Rock the House

The Kensington Stereo Dock simultaneously charges the iPod as it transmits iPod tunes through your stereo system. Handy infrared remote control operates interference free from up to 30 feet away. The Stereo Dock is made for all iPods with dock connector, including 15GB, 20GB, 30GB, 40GB, 60GB, iPod mini and iPod photo. Compatible with any iPod with dock connector including iPod nano and iPod with video.

Features

- * Plays iPod tunes through your home stereo.
- * Simultaneously charges iPod in the cradle.
- * Infrared remote control operates from up to 30 feet away, without interference from other devices.
- * Five simple buttons – control Play/Pause, Skip Forward, Skip Back, Volume Up and Volume Down.
- * Sleek design compliments home stereo components.



Kensington

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By David Holloway



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Cocoon.
www.speckproducts.com
More info on Speck Products.
www.tunewear.com
More info on Tunewear products.
www.xtrememac.com
More nano goodies to explore

Nano takes off

THE iPod nano has only been available for six months or so, but there are already a slew of accessories available. The nano's notoriously scratch-prone casing, for one, makes some kind of protection a necessity rather than a luxury, and you'll probably want more than the Apple-supplied pouch. On top of that, there are the usual iPod add-ons: car kits and more. What follows is a mere tasting.

On the case. Speck Products has a number of options for the nano. The FunSkins (\$70) are for those who like to make a colour and shape statement. In this case the Cloud version is a light pink and shaped like a cloud. The Grass version is a bright green and looks like a clump of — you guessed it — grass. Both have removable belt clips and screen protectors. The ToughSkin (\$60) is a rubberised skin designed for those who like to push their nano hard on a daily basis. It includes a belt

clip and screen protector and comes in clear or black. The SkinTight (\$40) is a more standard skin. You have a choice of clear, black or pink. If you choose to pay a further \$10 for the deluxe version, you get a holster as well. You also have the option of buying a three-pack (\$65) for the standard or a two-pack (\$70) for the deluxe. All options are provided with screen protectors. The iGuy (\$65) is designed to catch the interest of even the most hardened iPod veteran. You get a case and posable figure all in one. Again a screen protector is supplied and your nano is fully dockable whilst encased in the iGuy — he just looks like he's sitting whilst docked. You have a choice of white or white.

The Speck range is distributed by Conexus (02 9975 2799).

STM, well known purveyor of laptop bags, has updated its Cocoon offering to incorporate the nano. It consists of a silicon skin with supplied lanyard and screen protector and then an external hard case. The skin has a Velcro tab on its rear, which then attaches to the Velcro on the interior of the hard case. There's a mesh pocket within the hard case — room for your ear buds or even dock cable at a stretch. The Cocoon retails for \$50. Contact STM on 02 8338 0222.

Xtreme Mac has released a number of cases for the nano. The IceFrame is a different take on a protective case in that you have two pieces of clear, impact-resistant plastic that make up the shell of the case. Joining the two pieces together is done via coloured pins — you receive four different colour sets with the case as well as four coloured rings for the nano's clickwheel. You then use whatever colour combinations to create your case. Additionally, a wrist lanyard is supplied that can be inserted in place of one of the pins. The TuffWrap Accent cases are silicon rubber and come in four colour combinations:

black/yellow, black/white, black/red and lavender/pink. All include a screen protector. The IceFrame retails for \$40, the TuffWrap Accents are \$30. Powermove (03 9499 2744) is the Australian distributor.

Tunewear has a whole new range out for nano as well. First cab off the rank is TuneFilm, which comes bundled as part of Tunewear's other nano products. It's designed to give you the basic coverage of your nano's most scratchable surfaces, being the clickwheel, screen and the engraveable rear of the unit.

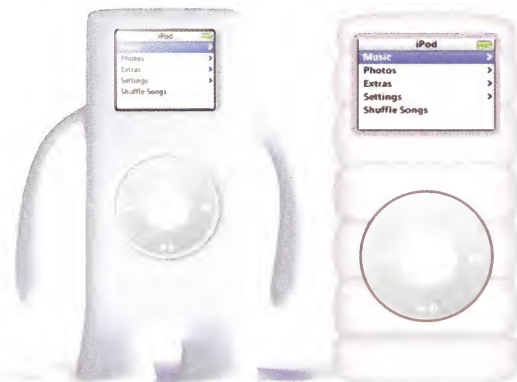
The Tunetag (\$40) looks like a luggage-tag holder that you see on most suitcases. It's made from nappa leather (nappa leather comes from sheep, lamb or kid skin — the goat kind, that is). You get a transparent vinyl sheet that allows you to control your nano whilst keeping it protected (doubly so given you get a TuneFilm with your purchase). Finally, you get a strap that allows you to attach the Tunetag to your suitcase, backpack or shoulder bag.

The Tunewallet (\$55) is the third leather case on offer, this time with a flip-cover. The nano slots into its own case, which is sewn into the overall wallet. There's a pocket for credit cards or business cards. This case would be a standout for those who throw their iPod in their bag for lengthy periods of time.

The Icewear nano (\$25 or \$45 for three) is a silicone case, an extension of the range for the other iPod models. Three colours are on offer: pink, grey and white. Once again, TuneFilm comes standard.

Again the distributor is Conexus (02 9975 2799).

Other accessories. Long-standing iPod accessory developer, Xtreme Mac, has come up with a range of nano accessories including an FM transmitter called the




AirPlay 2 (\$100). Aside from fitting a nano, there are other new features above and beyond the original AirPlay: three programmable station presets, a mono mode for better reception in crowded radio markets, and a blue display with white characters which should improve visibility.

The MicroBlast (\$200) is an external speaker unit designed solely for the nano. Like most other iPod iterations, the nano slides into a dock situated between the two speakers. One of the more innovative features is the ability to transport the MicroBlast with your iPod in situ, protected by a clear folding cover that forms part of the dock structure. It is powered by four AA batteries or the included AC adapter. As part of the package you receive black and white interchangeable frames and a travel pouch.

The MicroFlex Car (\$90) is a nano-specific cradle and charger. Powered by your car's 12-volt outlet, the flexible gooseneck allows you to position your nano in a wide variety of positions. You can charge whilst playing and it is compatible with the AirPlay 2. Available in black only.

Strictly speaking, the MicroSport (\$40) is a case, but it's unique enough to be classed as an accessory, particularly for the athletic iPod user. The MicroSport is made from moisture- (think sweat-) resistant material and is contoured to fit snugly in the palm of your hand, helped with an adjustable hand strap. Obviously designed for the jogger/runner/walker, it is certainly functional if not the most appealing accessory to own.

Powermove (03 9499 2744) is the Australian distributor for XtremeMac. 



Hot Links

www.propellerheads.se
Reasonable people

Standing to Reason

WAY back in the September 2002 issue of *AMW* I talked about the newly-released version 2.0 of Reason as a significant evolutionary step. Since that time version 2.5 came along and now version 3.0.

For the uninitiated, Reason is a virtual studio — it contains pretty much everything you need to create complete songs: a mixer, samplers, sound banks, effects units, a MIDI sequencer and drum machines. The only limit on the amount of virtual gear you can stack up and use is your Mac's RAM and CPU power. Put another way, Reason is GarageBand's big brother. Unlike GarageBand you can't record external audio into Reason — everything is created and tweaked within Reason itself. The only importation feature as such is the ability to import MIDI files.

Like any comprehensive music creation software, expect a learning curve initially. Spending some time getting your head around the way Reason handles sound can pay off handsomely in the longer term.


On the new features front, the standout is The Combinator. What it does is allow you to combine multiple instruments, effects and samples into one unit. An example: you create a string sound in Reason that is routed through two different effects units to create a distinct sound. By using the Combinator you can formalise this routing so that anytime you want to select it in future, it's one click of a mouse to do so. No need to remember the routings and set them up each time you start on a new song.

Another use would be to have different instruments played by different keys on your MIDI keyboard, or even different instruments playing based on how hard you play the keyboard. It's a feature that comes into its own when you actually have a play with it. Essentially you can create a limitless range of sounds by using the routing capabilities of the Combinator.

The second large addition is the MClass Mastering Suite. It provides you with an arsenal of tools to make your song sonically coherent and professional. One other note-



worthy feature is increased automatic recognition of external MIDI devices, which means less time manually configuring devices to work with Reason.

If you feel you've reached your limits with GarageBand and you like stretching sound boundaries, Reason is more than worth a look. Even better, a demo version can be downloaded from the Propellerheads web site (a 65-megabyte download). If you decide to buy it will cost you \$749 or \$449 if an education user. An upgrade costs \$199 if upgrading from any previous full version (\$149 if an education user) and \$549 if upgrading from Reason Adapted. Reason is distributed by Music Link Australia (03 9765 6565). 

By Anthony Caruana

**Hot Links**
www.rim.com
 Home of BlackBerry

The BlackBerry situation

If you're mobile and have to stay in reach of your e-mail anywhere and anytime, then the BlackBerry by Research In Motion (RIM) has been the only show in town for some time. While Microsoft's Exchange Server now has push e-mail capability, it was RIM that blazed the trail. In fact, while the original push was for corporate users, telcos around the world have brought mobile e-mail to the masses and done away with the need for a corporate e-mail infrastructure, and Australia's major carriers now offer consumer-level BlackBerry services.

BlackBerry 101. BlackBerry services, whether for consumers or corporates, work the same way. A piece of software running on a BlackBerry Enterprise Server, or BES, polls an e-mail account. When a new message arrives in the mailbox, the BES grabs the message, encrypts it and then routes it to a device running a BlackBerry client.

In a corporate environment that has its own mail server running on a platform such as Exchange or Lotus Notes, the BES would likely be hosted locally. However, even when the local BES collects an e-mail it forwards it to a server owned by RIM so that it can be routed to your handset. For this reason many organisations have a policy of not using BlackBerry services, as confidential communications are being routed through third-party servers that are usually hosted in foreign countries.

In principle, consumer BlackBerry services work the same way. However, a service provider hosts the BES that polls your personal e-mail account. This means you need to tell them the username and password for your account.

Whether using a consumer or corporate BlackBerry set-up, e-mails arrive on the handheld within seconds of being received in your mailbox.

Handhelds and clients. For some time, the only way to access a BlackBerry

service was to use a one of RIM's proprietary handsets. These usually sported full QWERTY keyboards and were quite easy to use. However, as they also worked as mobile phones, they were a little large.

More recently, RIM has licensed their BlackBerry client technology to other device OEMs such as Nokia and O2. This signals a move for RIM with the transition to software solutions provider. However, be aware that not all BlackBerry client software is created equally. While some devices support remote calendar synchronisation (which is of substantial benefit in corporate environments) others don't. If you're planning to use a non-RIM handset, make sure you check things out thoroughly.

RIM's handhelds come in distinct form factors. Their original devices have a full QWERTY keyboard while more recent models look more like a regular mobile phone and use RIM's own form of predictive text input called SureType. Instead of allocating three or four letter to each key, SureType only allocates two characters and has the letters arranged in QWERTY formation rather than alphabetically. Think of it as using a normal keyboard with half as many keys.

Breaking the confusopoly.

All the carriers we looked at offered the same devices with 7100 and 7290. In the case 7100, Telstra and Optus designate it as the 7100g while Vodaphone calls it a 7100v. The hardware is the same with some differences in external trim and embedded firmware.

If you're planning to replace you mobile with a BlackBerry so that your voice calls, SMS and e-mail are handled through a single device then look at the BlackBerry 7100. It uses SureType and looks like a normal, albeit slightly wide, phone.


If you plan to retain your current mobile and want a separate device for e-mail, then the BlackBerry 7290 might be more suitable with its full keyboard and larger screen.

Cost factor.

Vodaphone has the easiest costs to calculate. For starters, there are no contract periods and hardware and voice are charged separately. Handsets are priced at \$649 for the 7100v and \$799 for the 7290. Both can be paid off interest-free over up to 24 months. Data plans come in two flavours with a \$29.95 monthly for a meagre 1 MB of traffic (enough for about 500 e-mails) or a \$49.95 unlimited plan. You can then choose whatever voice plan suits you.

Optus offers the same hardware with the 7100g priced at \$23 per month and the 7290 at \$29 per month on a two-year contract. With Optus it's worth looking at the upfront purchase cost as it may be cheaper to buy the handset outright depending on which model you choose. Data plans start at \$26.95 for current Optus Mobile users and range up to a \$99 per month capped plan. If you plan to use the handset for voice calls you'll need to choose a voice plan as well.

Telstra completes the triumvirate of confusion. Both handsets are priced \$33.29 for a two-year commitment. However, the cost of the handset can be reduced or even removed if you bundle in a voice plan. Data plans are set at \$49, \$79 and \$99 depending on how much web surfing you plan to do. All these plans offer web access but it's charged by connection time rather than by bandwidth. This means that you'll be charged for maintaining an idle connection.

The last word. If you need to have your e-mail with you all the time then BlackBerry is for you. For sheer simplicity, we like the Vodaphone way of doing things but Optus and Telstra offer broader geographic coverage without roaming between networks. 





Hot Links

www.blackberry.com

Get software for your BlackBerry

Will BlackBerry survive?

LET'S get something settled straight away — regardless of the financial outcome in Research in Motion's lawsuit with NTP it's unlikely that RIM will be asked to shut down and dismantle its servers and systems. The matter is so serious that the US Department of Justice said that the nation's political, business, and security affairs could be harmed NTP succeeds in forcing RIM to halt the sale of the BlackBerry within US borders. They've asked that any injunction made on US use of BlackBerries will not affect government employees.

The story began way back in 2001 with NTP launching its legal attack on RIM. The next year a Federal Court jury awarded NTP 5.7 per cent of all RIM's BlackBerry sales in the US. By March 2005 RIM and NTP came to a settlement valued at a massive \$US450 million but just three months later that collapsed and by the end of last year the US Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal and it seems that the original decision stands. This will equate to several billion dollars if it is upheld.

In between times, there has been great conjecture about NTP's motives in this. It is a Virginia-based patent holding company and doesn't actually make any products. In the

past it did claim to have built prototype devices but has never put a device to market.

So, why won't RIM be ordered to shut down operations? For a start, the basis of NTP's case is its possession of a number of patents. In December 2005 the US Patent and Trademark Office decided to expedite a review of patents held by NTP. James L. Balsillie, chairman and co-chief executive of RIM, said the agency has signalled that it will reject all of the patents in question. If the patents get rejected then the case will, assumedly, fall apart as well. Already, seven of NTP's eight claims have been rejected.

Even if the patents are rejected but the case against RIM stands, RIM maintains that it has developed workarounds that will allow the service to continue. If that's the case then RIM will end up paying NTP some money but will still be able to continue its operation.

Why RIM hasn't started to put those workarounds in place is a little bewildering.

Its stock price is slowly falling, despite growing revenues, and its customers are getting a little toey. In mid-2005, the Gartner Group recommended that enterprise BlackBerry deployments should wait until the patent case is resolved.

This entire story is the stuff of a case study. A company that innovates and brings an idea to market is potentially crippled by one that produces nothing but paper work. It's already attracting plenty of attention and may even lead to a review of how the US patent system works. 




The MacBerry?

OUT of the box, the BlackBerry has always been a PC users staple. Microsoft Exchange and Lotus Notes users have been well supported but Mac users were left out in the cold.

For some time IAA, developer of PocketMac, has been finding and delivering ways to sync your Mac with just about every handheld on the planet. Last year it built PocketMac for BlackBerry and it's so good that the folks at RIM have decided to license the software.

PocketMac for BlackBerry integrates with iSync and provides an easy way to sync e-mail, contacts, calendars, tasks and notes from Microsoft Entourage, OS X's Address Book and iCal, Now Contact and Now Up-to-Date, DayLite, and Stickies, among other applications.

Ron Okamoto, Apple's Vice President of Worldwide Developer Relations says "We're thrilled that IAA and RIM have collaborated to better support mobile Mac users with easy-to-use BlackBerry synchronisation." 



Hot Links

www.blackberry.com

Do a little digging to find Mac software

By Seamus Byrne



Hot Links

www.jcurve.tv

J-Curve's site, where you can register to get some good broadcast recruitment information

Pro File: Karl Jansson

J-CURVE Broadcast Consultants is a boutique consultancy that provides professional recruitment services to the broadcast community, managing assignments from Production to Engineering to Executives across television, radio, multimedia, film and entertainment. AMW spoke to Karl Jansson, General Manager, about J-Curve's perspective on the Australian broadcast and film industry — and where you and your skills fit in.

How has the Mac's place in video production changed over the past ten years?

It's the most popular production format in today's society. It's extensively used throughout production houses due not only to the software available, but also its functionality and commonality. Functionality for ease of use and instruction whilst commonality for its worldwide acceptance within the global talent pool.

Whether its acceptance is greater in different areas such as broadcast and film? Difficult to say. There are, however, a number of outside influencing factors that are impacting the joint use of both formats.

I know that productions such as the recently completed King Kong in New Zealand were shot on film then reeled into a digitiser, downloaded digitally enhanced with special effects and then re-loaded back onto film using a new laser technology. The software behind it was PC-based but I understand the special effects were under Mac.

What are the skills and applications that are most in demand right now?

By far, Final Cut Pro is an industry standard that has been and remains to be a hot skills package. On the PC side, Adobe Premier Pro is as popular, so too is Sony Vegas. Other packages? After Effects, Combustion, Compositing Suite, and Avid.

Is deep but limited knowledge best? Or are broader skills more attractive?

Due to the changing face of technology a broader skill set is preferred. For example I have a number of clients who use a character generator call Chyron Max, but not a lot of call for it across the board today due to alternative packages.

I raise this as an example because if there's an opportunity to use a software package that's by nature unfamiliar to you or not recognised as the industry norm then embrace it, because those organisations who have it will welcome you with open arms.

Multiple skill sets not only increase your employment opportunities — they may also prune you for an early supervisory role. The packages mentioned earlier are recommended for anyone seeking a career in a professional production facility.

For someone without industry experience, what should they do on their own time to enhance their chances of breaking through?

I recommend seeking out a number of TAFE-based courses where Final Cut Pro is the most commonly used format. Also check out video production clubs that may also have production facilities.

For those with a track record, do you have any tips for standing out from the crowd?

In real estate it's location, location, location. In creative, it's presentation, presentation, presentation. You must have a show reel or presentation as an example of your skills. This should be polished and available in two formats: first, a DVD is always a given; second, a formatted presentation available on a web site to be viewed by potential employers is impressive.

Have business cards with your details. This will make it easier to get an outcome from an impromptu meeting, no matter where you might be. A word of warning though: busi-



ness cards are a reflection of you. Be sure that they are of solid stock, not flimsy, and good quality. Home-printed cards on retail card stock are not going to cut it.

Any further advice?

If you have a genuine passion for your industry then best you mix and mingle. If there's an industry function on somewhere then register. There are always a number of networking functions throughout the year, usually attached to trade shows, and usually gratis.

Another word of warning: presentation is important at all times. If the company is conservative, dress accordingly. Remember it's a sign of respect for the organisers who may be seeking new team talent. Don't forget, alcohol can be a friend or foe!

If you have an opportunity to address a meeting at any time, take it by the reins and go with it, as long as you are prepared — both mentally and in material.

Sign on with relevant web newsletters and keep up-to-date with the industry news. How else to highlight your passion than to have online conversation with peers? It may lead to other introductions of influence. ☞

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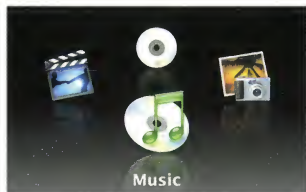
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Adobe® Creative Suite 2 Pr from CS1	\$899	Adobe® Type Manager Del OS9 Mac	\$119	Macromedia® Director (from 8.5+)	\$599	Stuffit Deluxe	\$ 5
Adobe® Dimension	\$149	QuarkXpress® v3 to v6.5	\$775	Macromedia® Dreamweaver® 8	\$299	Suitcase	\$ 8
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Mirror, mirror

MOST of us would recognise reflective practice as part of learning, and, as the academic year kicks off I'd like to think a bit more about our pedagogy.

It's tempting to view technology in education as a box that needs to be ticked, whether this be a teacher's "yes I use technology" or a principal's "we have a 5:1 ratio of students to computers". I have always taken the view that this is far too simplistic and that there are instances where inappropriate technology use can actually be counterproductive, but hard evidence has not been particularly easy to find.

In research recently reported in *The Telegraph* in London, Michelle Donnelly found that "computers used in British schools to teach children to read are harming their learning." She went on to say that "the children were more highly motivated to read a talking story than a conventional book, but ... the interactive group had significantly poorer recall. Although clicking on animations is fun, many do not relate to the storyline." Her research adds to the findings of David Buckingham, a professor at the Institute of Education, London, who found that "the vast spending on information and communication technology has had little or no impact on standards."

This invites the question: how could you possibly expect success from a technology that used animations that "do not relate to the storyline"? We need some analysis and reflection.

The motivational power of technology may be desirable, but it is not a sufficient condition for adoption. Too much "child minding" is done in the name of computer use. The reading example quoted above appears to put the student into an active and engaged role, but it is a distractive activity, unrelated to the task at hand — achieving the learning outcome is passive in its nature.

I want to relate my recent experiences with an English teacher, who had organised an interesting task for his 15-year-olds. To assist in the study of character in their current book, he asked them to find a poster for the film version on the web, copy it into a word processor and write a few paragraphs describing how their chosen visual text articulated their understanding of a character in the novel. Great exercise. His students were working well, on task, engaged, buzzing.

When reflecting on this, he said that he felt "out of the loop" and disengaged from his students: they knew how to do the Word stuff, knew how to search Google images and so on and didn't seem to



Hot Links

www.smh.com.au/news/technology/interactive-learning-flops/2006/01/09/1136771500779.html

Research on the lack of success of some interactive reading programs

www.apple.com/ilife

Full details on iLife'06

tauquil.com/archives/2006/01/06/re-introducing-the-real-windows-vista

Two beautiful QuickTime videos mock the presentation of Vista to the recent Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas

need him. This is a common occurrence and it often marks a watershed for teachers.

I guess if you asked a bunch of people in the street to describe what a teacher does, they'd make some reference to someone standing in front of a bunch of kids. Terms such as "learning facilitator" smack of new age correctness, but there's a solution for the English teacher: why not use this new-found time to work with a few students, giving one on one time that would not normally be available. There's an important observation here: he hasn't set "busy work" to create this

time; the students were working independently and were learning.

Many will recognise this as teachers being a "guide on the side", not a "sage on the stage". Once this is realised, powerful facilitation can happen — the trick is to use a combination of powerful software and hardware in an appropriate way.

Can you see where I'm heading? Well-designed technology, that doesn't get in the road, frees creativity in both student and teacher.

Let's take podcasting and its new face, videocasting.

After I showed the use of GarageBand for preparing podcasts at a recent Association of Independent Schools' conference, the questions quickly turned to what the predominantly

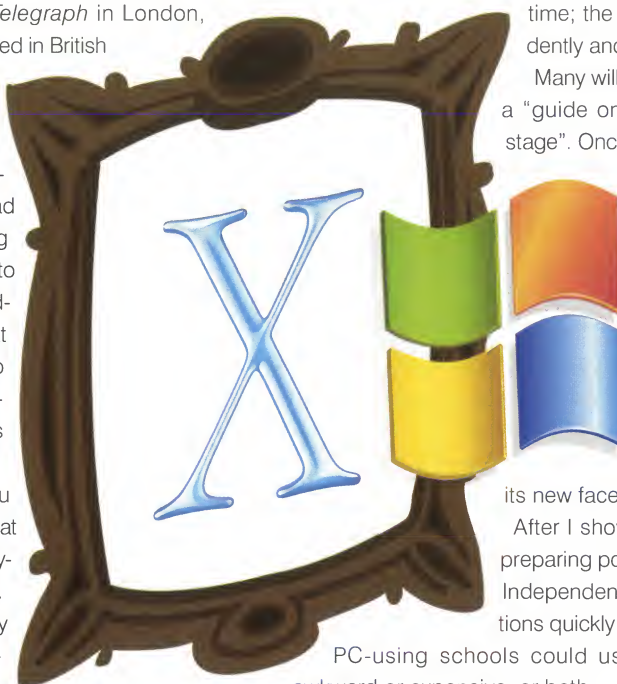
PC-using schools could use. Everything suggested was awkward or expensive, or both.

This was using the 2005 version of GarageBand, not the new, '06 version that can manage the full production, from soup to nuts as our US cousins are wont to say, including auto fade of underlying background musical content. Other elements in the iLife '06 suite allow one-click publishing of content to the web, movie, or print. Students can simply save to their Sites folder on an OS X server and give others the address.

Yet, apparently there are still some who use Windows. Now, I'm not saying that you will automatically become more creative using a Mac, but, in general, the path is smoother, shorter and usually ready for use earlier.

Who is the fairest of us all? 🍷

As an educator, Martin Levins likes empowering people to create using computing technologies.



By Anton Lineker

Convert video formats

Send video abroad

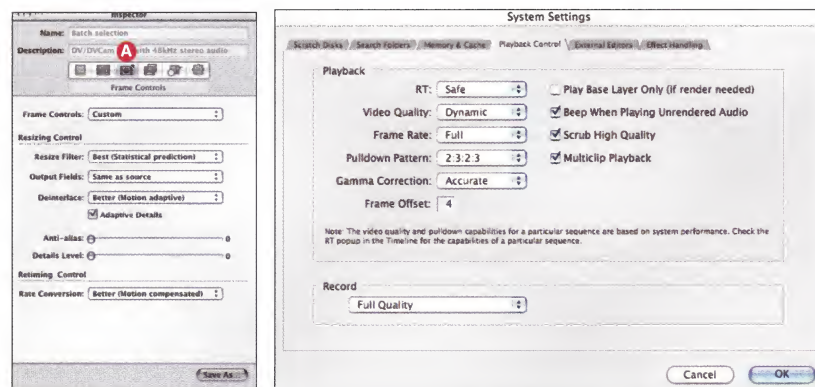
MOVIES may have a universal appeal, but video standards do not. To send movies from Australia to the USA (and some other places), you must first convert the video from the PAL standard to the NTSC standard. Until recently, that meant paying for a standards conversion – a process that can cost loads of money. If you have Apple's Final Cut Studio, you can get the same results from your Mac.

For reasons buried in antiquity, television standards around the world evolved along very different paths. The North American NTSC standard runs at 29.97 frames per second and has a visible resolution of 720 by 480 pixels for DV (720 by 486 pixels for uncompressed signals, such as Digital Betacam). The European PAL system runs at 25 fps and has a resolution of 720 by 576 pixels – giving it 96 more lines and 5 fewer frames per second.

Third-party Final Cut plug-ins, such as Nattress's Standards Conversion 2 (see "Hot links"), can convert from one standard to the other for you, but a robust standard converter ships with every version of Final Cut Studio – it's called Compressor 2. (Compressor also ships with the stand-alone versions of Final Cut Pro 5 and DVD Studio Pro 4.)

One of the major improvements in Compressor 2 is the addition of Optical Flow technology. Optical Flow tracks the movement of images at a pixel level. So if Compressor 2 needs to create 5 more frames per second, it can predict where those pixels would naturally go. However, to get the best quality from your conversions, you'll need to play with some of the settings within Compressor.

High standards. Using Compressor's DV PAL preset as a starting point, open the Inspector window's Frame Controls panel A and adjust the settings as seen here to fine-tune the NTSC-to-PAL conversion process.



Hot Links

www.nattress.com
Standards converter

For simplicity's sake, these instructions cover only DV conversions. However, once you understand the workflow, you can easily adapt it to other formats, including uncompressed video and DV50. One downside to using Compressor for this process is that it's rather slow – my dual-2.5GHz G5 needed 30 minutes to convert a minute of NTSC footage. Compressor 2 does allow you to combine the processing power of several networked computers to cut down significantly on conversion time.

Converting from NTSC to PAL. To convert NTSC video, launch Compressor 2 and drag the NTSC movie to the Batch window. The movie's name will appear in the Source Media column. Click on the Settings pull-down menu and choose Advanced Format Conversions: DV PAL.

Although you could press the Submit button now, the results would likely disappoint you. The default settings leave much to be desired. To get the best results, you'll want to modify some of the settings and create a custom preset.

To adjust the conversion settings, open the Inspector window (Window: Show Inspector). Click on the Frame Controls button (it's the third from the left), and then select Custom from the Frame Controls pull-down menu (see the screenshot "High standards"). Next, set the Resize Filter menu to Best (Statistical Prediction). This changes the frame size from 480 pixels to 576 pixels using Optical Flow tracking. Set the Output Fields menu to Same As Source.

Here's the most important (and the least intuitive) part: set the Deinterlace menu to Better (Motion Adaptive) – not Best. If you set Deinterlace to Best, the resulting video is over-enhanced and filled with artefacts. It also takes much longer to render (four times longer on my dual-2.5GHz G5). Using the Better setting, on the other hand, results in a great picture.

Finally, set Rate Conversion to Better (Motion Compensated). This setting changes the frame rate from 29.97 fps to 25 fps. When you're done, click on Save As and give your customised preset the name NTSCtoPAL.

Return to the Batch window. Click on the Settings pull-down menu and choose your new NTSCtoPAL preset from the list. Delete the PAL DV session from the Batch window and click on Submit.

Stretching to fit. To finish the Slow-PAL conversion process, import your movie into Final Cut Pro and set the Pulldown Pattern menu to 2:3:2:3.

Converting from PAL to NTSC. There are two methods of converting from PAL to NTSC: traditional and Slow-PAL. The traditional method converts 25-fps PAL video to 29.97-fps NTSC video by creating new frames based on the pixel information in the existing frames (this is essentially the reverse of the NTSC-to-PAL process). This leaves the movie's audio quality and run-time unaltered. While the video quality isn't as pristine as what you'll get with the Slow-PAL method, it's still quite good.

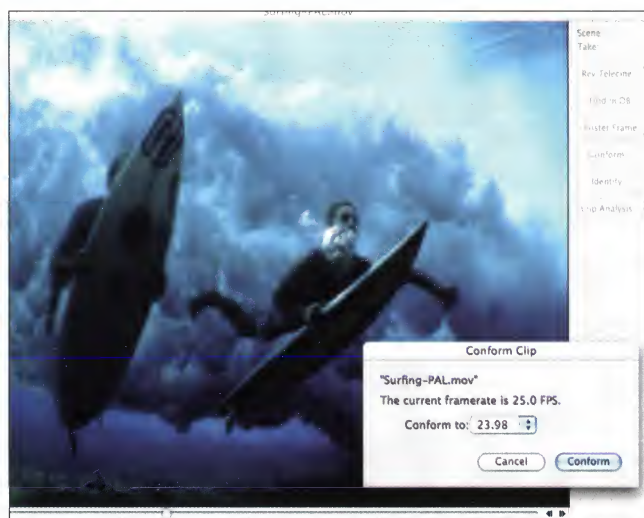
With the Slow-PAL method, on the other hand, the goal is to manipulate the video frames as little as possible – and thus end up with a better-looking video. You'll use Apple's Cinema Tools (included with Final Cut Studio) to change the frame rate from 25 fps to 23.98 fps before converting the video to the NTSC standard in Compressor. You'll then use Final Cut to fill out the movie to 29.97 fps by strategically duplicating video fields (this process is similar to the telecine process used with film).

Although it's more work, the Slow-PAL method results in excellent video quality – one reason most professional services use this method. The conversion process is also much faster. The downside is that the converted video runs roughly four percent slower than the original and the sound drops slightly in pitch (though few people will notice the difference).

The traditional method. To convert PAL to NTSC using the traditional method, follow the same process as for converting NTSC to PAL, but with one important change: choose Advanced Format Conversions: DV NTSC from the Settings pull-down menu. Then change the other menus as described previously, and save the custom preset as PALtoNTSC. Use the new preset for the conversion process.

The Slow-PAL method. If you're willing to put in the extra work, I recommend the Slow-PAL method.

1 Launch Cinema Tools. You don't need to build a database for this process, so disregard the database queries as the program starts. Choose Open Clip from the File menu and select the PAL movie you want to convert. It will load into a viewing window (see the screenshot "Slow-PAL"). Click on the Conform button. When the Conform Clip dialog box appears, choose 23.98 from the Conform To pull-down menu. Then click on the Conform button in the dialog box. Conforming the video file changes the frame-rate data only of the QuickTime file, not of the video frames themselves. As a result, the finished movie file will run slightly longer.



Slow-PAL. Using Cinema Tools, conform your PAL video from 25 fps to 23.98 fps.

2 When Cinema Tools is done, drag the file into Compressor's Batch window. From the Settings pull-down menu, select Advanced Format Conversions: DV NTSC. Open the Inspector window's Frame Controls panel and set Resize Filter to Best (Statistical Prediction), set Output Fields to Same As Source or Progressive, and set Deinterlace to Better (Motion Adaptive). Then set Rate Conversion to Fast (Nearest Frame).

3 While still in the Inspector window, click on the Encoder tab (the second button from the left), and then click on the Video Settings button. In the dialog box that appears, change the Frame Rate menu to Current and click on OK. Save the preset as Slow-PALtoNTSC and use it to submit your job.

4 Since NTSC video runs at 29.97 fps, you now need to somehow add 6 frames (or 12 fields) of video per second. You do this by inserting a 3:2 cadence – a process that repeats one out of every four video fields. Evenly spreading out the repeated fields allows the video to remain smooth.

To do this, import the converted Slow-PAL clip into Final Cut Pro 5 and create a new sequence set to DV NTSC 48 kHz 23.98. Open the System Settings window's Playback Control panel and set the Pulldown Pattern menu to 2:3:2:3 (see the screenshot "Stretching to fit"). Finally, output the video to a FireWire video deck (File: Edit To Tape). The result should be a superb NTSC product. 🖱️

By Shangara Singh

Optimising Photoshop CS2

Speed up Photoshop

MOST people would prefer not to see the spinning beach ball when working in Photoshop. Although eliminating it is not always possible, you can go some way toward doing that by managing your resources wisely. To that end, it's worth spending a few minutes fine-tuning Photoshop to squeeze the maximum performance out of it.

Adjusting cache levels. When you view an image in the document window at anything less than 100 percent magnification, Photoshop can use low-resolution cached versions of the 100 percent view for speedier redraws. This can be helpful if you constantly work on large images and you need to zoom out frequently. However, it will take longer to open files while Photoshop creates the low-resolution previews.

You can specify the number of cache levels in the Preferences: Memory & Image Cache screen (press ⌘-K to open the Preferences dialog box). The higher the number of cache levels, the more resources Photoshop needs to consume. If you have limited RAM or scratch-disk space, you may wish to set the number of levels to 1 or 2; the default is four levels. You can go as high as eight levels, which will give you cached views at 66.67, 50, 33.33, 25, 16.67, 12.5, 8.33, and 6.25 percent.

Although the cached views can help with speedier redraws, you'll do well to remember that any reading based on a cached view will be misleading; for example, when you sample a colour or use a cached view to judge the effect of a filter, what you're looking at will not be based on actual pixels. For critical readings, always view the image at 100 percent magnification.

Reducing History states. The History feature has become one of the most widely used in Photoshop. Its major downside is that it's another resource hog.

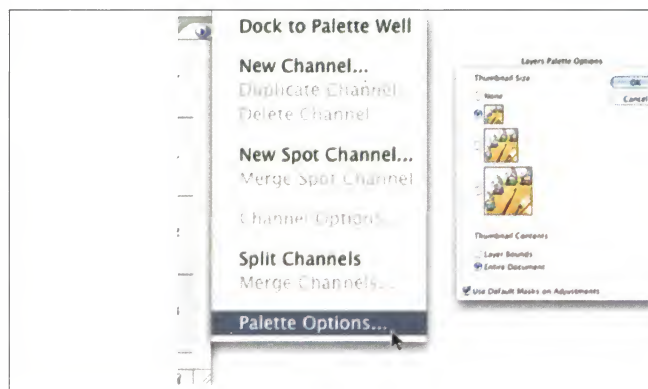
You can change several options to conserve and stretch your resources. The first one is the number of History states that Photoshop saves in RAM or on your scratch disk. The higher the number, the more resources are eaten up. However, the higher the number, the more undos are available to you should you need to step back to a previous state. You need to strike a good balance between a fallback position and the ability to cruise faster.

By default, Photoshop saves 20 History states. You can change this number at any time via the Preferences: General screen's History States setting. If you find that you rarely go back beyond, say, ten History states, then reducing the number will allow the saved resources to be used elsewhere. If you find your-



Hot Links

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Home of Creative Suite



Losing thumbnails. Palette previews consume resources. Select None or the smallest thumbnail size to conserve them.

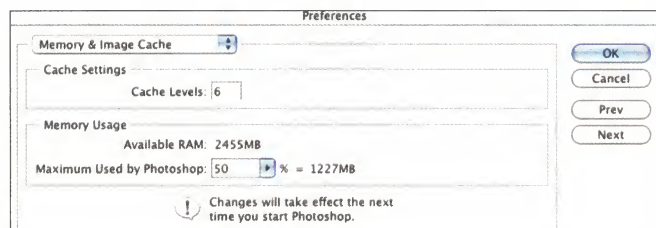
self constantly trying to find states that have disappeared from the History palette, then increase the default number and just put up with slower performance, which may not be noticeable if you have small files or if you have large reserves of RAM.

Reducing palette thumbnail size. The palettes also have options that can affect performance. For example, the Layers, Channels, and Paths palettes all store thumbnails by default, and these thumbnails are continually updated as you work on an image. However, to draw and update the thumbnails, Photoshop uses resources that may be gainfully employed elsewhere. If your resources are painfully low, you may want to select None or the smallest thumbnail size. To customise the palette previews, select Palette Options from the palette's menu and then choose an option that suits your needs (see the screenshot "Losing thumbnails").

Do you really need that snapshot? You can set other options that affect performance by selecting History Options from the History palette menu.

The first two options in the History Options dialog box, Automatically Create First Snapshot and Automatically Create New Snapshot When Saving, are the ones that consume extra resources.

The first option is actually quite handy, even if it does consume extra resources. It can get you out of a tight spot if you accidentally flatten a multi-layered file or press ⌘-S but don't discover your mistake until well into the editing session, by which time the earlier states will have been overwritten, including the first state. When you click on the snapshot, the document will revert back to the state it was in when it was first viewed in



A better memory. If you experience slow performance, try reducing the RAM allocation to 50 or 60 percent in the Memory Usage section of the Memory & Image Cache pane of the Preferences dialog box.

Photoshop, which may not be the same as the version on disk if you changed its colour profile in any way when you opened it.

The second option (Automatically Create New Snapshot When Saving) is one that you can probably live without; you'll have to decide whether to take advantage of it. Just remember that it will consume extra resources if enabled.

Assigning RAM. All the software on your computer, from the operating system to applications to widgets, relies heavily on RAM for speed and efficiency. Photoshop can guzzle RAM the way a Mercedes G500 guzzles petrol. So you need to give it as much RAM as you can possibly afford. The key word here is afford because the operating system also needs a plentiful supply of RAM; therefore, it's a bad idea to starve it while indulging Photoshop.

Photoshop gets its share of RAM from the figure allocated to it in Preferences. When it has used up its allocation, it pages out the data to the hard disk (allocated to it as the scratch disk in Preferences), and the result is that it runs more slowly. Knowing this, you may be tempted to max out the RAM allocation at 100 percent in order to make it run faster. Not a good idea! Allocating too much memory to Photoshop may slow down performance by forcing the operating system and Photoshop to swap pages in and out of memory. So what amount of available RAM should you allocate? It depends.

Photoshop can use a maximum of only 4GB of RAM. This limitation is imposed by hardware, operating systems, and some other things that only geeks and engineers with degrees in astrophysics understand fully. Suffice it to say, if you have 4GB of RAM, or more, installed, you can safely increase the RAM allocation to 70 percent. Doing so will ensure that Photoshop uses as much RAM as it possibly can, up to the 3.7GB limit (or thereabouts, because the OS will reserve some of the 4GB for itself). If you do not have more than 4GB of RAM installed, you should reduce the allocation to about 50 or 60 percent, especially if you are experiencing slow performance in Photoshop, which includes Camera Raw. To allocate RAM, go to Preferences: Memory & Image Cache and specify a percentage in the Memory Usage section of the dialog box (see the screenshot "A better memory"). You will need to restart Photoshop before the revised allocation takes effect.

Assigning scratch disks. Photoshop uses a temporary file for storing data and performing computations when there is insufficient RAM. It places this temporary file, or scratch disk, on your

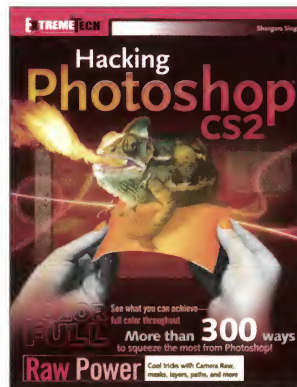
hard disk, or it can spread the file across several hard disks. When you exit Photoshop, this temporary file is deleted, and a fresh one is created the next time you launch Photoshop.

By default, Photoshop uses your startup hard drive as the location for the scratch disk. This is something to be avoided because it can hinder performance if your OS also uses that drive for its virtual memory needs. Because OS X uses the startup drive to place its paging file, you are almost guaranteed conflict on a Mac. To overcome this potential conflict of interests, you can tell Photoshop which hard disk to place its scratch disk on – provided, of course, that you have more than one hard disk installed in your computer. If you have just one disk but it's partitioned, selecting a partition different from the one containing the OS virtual memory files won't speed up performance. In fact, performing some operations may even take longer because the read-write heads will have to travel farther.

You can assign scratch disk(s) in the Preferences: Plug-Ins & Scratch Disks screen. It's possible to assign up to four hard disks, or partitions, and Photoshop will see them as one large storage space for the temporary file. Photoshop supports up to 64EB (an exabyte [EB] is equal to 1 billion gigabytes) of scratch-disk space – more than sufficient for most needs!

Regardless of the number of hard disks you assign, make sure the minimum size is three to five times the RAM allocated to Photoshop. Furthermore, the hard drive should be fast, and if it's partitioned, the first partition should be assigned. Do not assign removable media, such as a Zip drive, or a network drive as a scratch disk. If you assign dedicated partitions that do not store any other files, defragging should not be required.

Needless to say, the more space you can spare, the lower the likelihood that you will encounter the dreaded "Scratch Disk Is Full" error message at a crucial moment. ☹



By the book. This article is an excerpt from *Hacking Photoshop CS2*, by Shangara Singh (2005; reprinted by permission of Wiley Publishing).

By David Pogue and Chris Stone

Fix permissions the geeky way

Take command of permissions

THE command line may not be the most intuitive way to control your Mac, but often it's the fastest — especially when it comes to permissions. These behind-the-scenes settings determine whether you're allowed to open, change, or delete files and folders. You can use the Finder's Get Info command (⌘-I) to view a file's permissions — but you won't see all the settings Unix provides, and every now and then you might want to.

When Terminal saves time. Suppose, for example, that you're a teacher in charge of a computer lab containing 25 Macs. On each computer, you've created standard accounts for five students, for a total of 125 student accounts. Soon after the students start using the lab, you notice a bit more giggling and frantic typing than you'd expect from students researching Depression-era economics. You nonchalantly stroll to the end of the room and do a quick about-face at one of the desks.

Aha — iChat! Horribly depressed by the comments you read there regarding your fashion sense, you vow to keep students from using that application ever again. You have several options. You could delete iChat from every Mac's Applications folder. Unfortunately, the computer club meets in your classroom after school, and its members routinely use iChat to communicate. You could set up Parental Controls for each account . . . but you'll have to repeat the task 124 times.

Or you could go to a Mac, fire up Terminal (/Applications/Utilities), and type a quick command to turn off iChat's execute permissions for standard account holders. (The computer club's members all have administrator accounts.) And you'll have to repeat this job only 24 times.

A peek inside permissions. To view iChat's ownership and permissions information with Terminal, use the `ls` command, like this:

```
ls -l /Applications/iChat.app/Contents/MacOS
```

The `-l` flag produces a long list — an expanded display showing extra information about each item in the directory (in this case, its single iChat file). Terminal's response will include something like this:

Type	File Mode		Owner	Group			
drwxrwxr-x	54	root	admin	1836	Aug 28	15:41	



Hot Links

macchampion.com/arbyssoft
Get BatChmod to all this less geekily

```
total 4400
-rwxrwxr-x 1 root admin 2252792 Mar 20 21:07
iChat
```

What's `-rwxrwxr-x`? You're seeing Unix shorthand for the application's permissions, listed in what are supposed to be helpful columns (see the screenshot "Crack the code").

> **Type.** The first character of the line indicates the file type — usually `d` for a directory, `l` for a symbolic link (the Unix version of an alias), or, as in this case, a hyphen (`-`) for a file.

> **File mode.** Rammed together with the file type is a string of nine characters (in this case, `rwxrwxr-x`). It indicates, in a coded format, the actual access permissions for that item (see the sidebar "Decode File-Mode code").

> **Owner.** Terminal's response also identifies the account name of whoever owns this file or directory, which is usually whoever created it; `root` means that OS X itself owns it. That's why even administrators generally aren't allowed to delete directories with root ownership. (In the Finder's Get Info windows, you may see ownership listed as System. That's Apple's kinder, gentler term for root.)

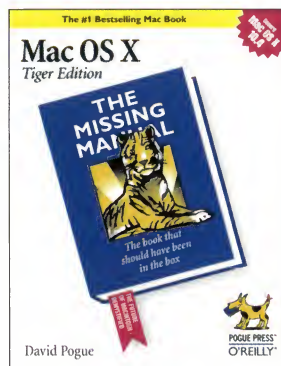
> **Group.** After the owner comes the name of the group that owns this file or directory. The `admin` group contains all administrators.

> **Path name.** At the end of the line (following the file's size and date) comes the path of this file or directory, relative to the listed directory.

Masterminding your plan. Now, back to the task of keeping iChat from launching. As you look at iChat's permissions, the `x` in every user category tells you that anyone can run the program. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to change these settings so that one class of account holder (`admin`) can run iChat, but another class (`standard`) can't.

As you've seen, every file's set of permissions identifies both an owner and a group. The group that owns the iChat file is `admin`. As you would expect, the `admin` class of users is part of

Crack the code. Here's one line of what the `ls -al` command produces. The letters in the file-mode column aren't just random — the three distinct sets of information here tell you who's allowed to do what.



By the book. This article was adapted from *Mac OS X: The Missing Manual, Tiger Edition*, by David Pogue (reprinted by permission of O'Reilly Media, 2005).

the admin group, so administrators and anyone else in the admin group will have no trouble running the program.

As far as permissions are concerned, standard account holders fall into the “everyone else” category. To complete your task, you just need to turn off iChat’s execute permissions for everyone else. Doing so allows only the file’s owner (root) and members of its group (admin) to execute the file (that is, to open the program). All other account holders – that is, people in the standard group – are out of luck. They’ll actually have to pay attention in class.

Putting it together with chmod. The Unix command for changing file modes (permissions) is chmod (short for change mode). Here’s the command you’d use on the iChat file:

```
chmod o-x /Applications/iChat.app/Contents/MacOS/iChat
```

And here’s how it works. The command line begins, naturally, with the chmod command itself, and ends with the path name of the iChat file.

In between are three characters that make up the three parts of a mode-change clause: o-x. The first character, o, represents the class of user that the change affects. In this spot, you can type u to symbolise the file’s owner, g for its group, o for other (everyone else), or a to indicate all three classes at once.

The second character represents the operation to perform, which in most cases is either to add a permission using the plus sign (+) or to remove one using the hyphen (-). The final character specifies which permission to change: r for read, w for write, or x for execute.

So the complete chmod command provided above says, “Remove the execute permissions for others,” which is precisely what you want to do.

Get permission. If you actually try the chmod command described above, however, you’ll get an error message (“Operation not permitted”). Only the owner of an item can change its permissions, and you’re not iChat’s owner.

So how do you solve the problem? Use the sudo command. Technically, sudo is short for superuser do, and it allows you to execute any command as though you’d logged in with the root (superuser) account. If you have the root account – or can simulate one using sudo – you can override any permissions settings, including the ones (like iChat’s) that prevent you from changing items in the Applications directory.

Finally, you’re ready to change the permissions of that infernal iChat application file. To use sudo, you must preface an entire command line with sudo followed by a space. Type this:

```
sudo chmod o-x /Applications/iChat.app/Contents/MacOS/iChat
```

This command breaks down as follows:

> **sudo:** “Give me the power to do whatever I want.”


> **chmod:** “Change the file mode . . .”

> **o-x:** “. . . in this way: remove execute permission for others . . .”

> **/Applications/iChat.app/Contents/MacOS/iChat:** “. . . from the file called iChat, which is inside the Applications/iChat.app /Contents/MacOS folder.”

Then sudo will ask for your administrator password, just to confirm that you’re not some year seven kid up to no good. Now whenever anyone who isn’t an administrator tries to open iChat, its icon will bounce just once in the Dock – nothing more. To restore iChat’s original permissions, use the same command, but replace the hyphen with a plus sign, like this:

```
sudo chmod o+x /Applications/iChat.app/Contents/MacOS/iChat
```

Note that whenever OS X’s Repair Permissions function runs (either automatically, which happens each time you install a Mac OS X update, or manually, via Disk Utility), iChat returns to its original permissions settings. You have to rerun the command. 

Decode file-mode code

You don’t need a secret decoder ring to understand Unix permissions, but you do need to familiarise yourself with file-mode code. You’ll see this coded nine-character file-mode section whenever you use Terminal to uncover a file’s permissions.

The code’s three sub-columns correspond to three categories of people: owner, group, and everybody else. Within each sequence, three characters describe the read (r), write (w), and execute (x) permissions this person or group has for this file or directory. A hyphen (-) means “This person isn’t allowed this kind of access.”

Read access. Read access to a file means that someone can open and read it. (In the case of a program like iChat, the system needs to read the file on your behalf in order to run it.) Read access to a directory (folder), on the other hand, just means that someone using Terminal can see a list of its contents using a command such as ls.

Write access. Write access to a file means that someone can modify and save changes to it. Write access to a directory means that someone can add, remove, and rename any item the folder contains (but not necessarily the items within subdirectories).

Execute access. Execute access, when applied to an application, means that someone can run that particular program. (In fact, Unix distinguishes applications from ordinary files by checking the status of this setting.)

By Mark Vance

Use multiple iPods with multiple computers

Pod juggling

APPLE has made it pretty easy to sync an iPod with a computer, but what happens when things get a bit more complicated? You may have an entire family fighting to synchronise several iPods with one Mac. Or you may need to share sync duties between your home Mac and a Windows PC at work. If you have more music players or more computers than you know how to deal with, the following tips and tools can help.

Multiple iPods on the same Mac. Apple includes a unique identifier in each iPod, so iTunes can easily differentiate between multiple iPods and manage settings for all of them. When you use multiple iPods with one computer, assigning each a unique name will help avoid confusion. If you need to change an iPod's name, double-click on that name in the Source menu and enter a new one.

With multiple iPods, iTunes can load each player with the same collection or sync each device with its own customised playlist(s). By default, iTunes is set to Automatically Update All Songs And Playlists. If you want manual control, or if you're connecting an iPod that's synced with one computer to another system and don't want to overwrite all the music on it, you'll want to switch to manual mode. Connect the iPod, click on the No button if iTunes asks whether you want to link that iPod to the new library (you'll be asked only if the iPod has been previously linked to another computer), click on the iPod icon near the bottom right-hand corner of the iTunes window, and select Manually Manage Songs And Playlists in the resulting window (see the screenshot "Let me decide").

Since each person sharing the computer may prefer to maintain unique iTunes settings, you can set up multiple OS X user accounts, each with its own iTunes library and settings. A downside of this approach is that, by default, iTunes stores its music in each user's Home folder, which means that duplicate copies of shared songs will be maintained for each person.

To avoid having duplicate files, consider setting iTunes to store its Music folder in a location that each user can access, such as a FireWire drive, a network drive, or a part of a local hard drive accessible to all users. To relocate the folder, find its current location by looking at the General tab of iTunes' Advanced preference pane. Quit iTunes and move (or copy) the iTunes Music



Hot Links

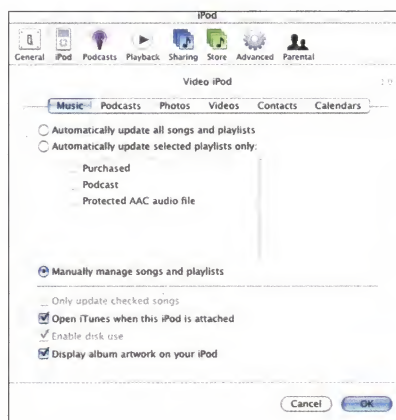
www.dougscripts.com/itunes/itinfo/ituneslibrarymanager.php
iTunes Library Manager
homepage.mac.com/sroy
Libra
homepage.mac.com/oligrob/syncOTunes/syncOTunes.html
syncOTunes
wbyoung.ambitiouslemon.com/
Senuti
www.scifihihi.com
PodWorks
www.crispssofties.com
iPod.iTunes
www.mp3tunes.com
Online MP3 storage
www.mediafour.com
XPlay

folder you just found to a new location. Relaunch iTunes, and specify your folder's new location by clicking on the Change button and pointing iTunes to the folder (also under the General tab of iTunes' Advanced pane). Repeat this process for other user accounts on the same computer, and you're set.

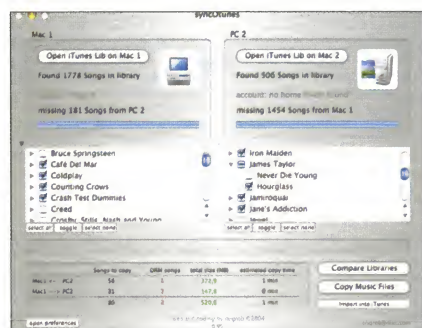
If you don't have multiple OS X user accounts, another solution is Doug Adams's iTunes Library Manager 4.2.5 (see "Hot links"), which lets you create multiple iTunes library and preference configurations without duplicating files. Once this AppleScript applet is installed, you run it by choosing it from the Scripts menu in iTunes' menu bar. The first time you launch the applet, it will prompt you to save the current library. You then create as many configurations as you need, and you can load each one as necessary. A similar program, Steve Roy's Libra 2.0.4 (see "Hot links"), also works with Windows.

Multiple computers. When connecting an iPod to more than one computer, you may want to have all the same music and associated ratings available on each system. There are several ways to do this.

Networked computers. Synchronising iTunes manually between computers can be a laborious task. Oligrob Software's syncOTunes 0.95 (see "Hot links") can ease this chore. It's designed to sync libraries and settings, provided that the computers involved can communicate directly over a network.



Let me decide. For more control — or to avoid overwriting an iPod's existing files — when you're connecting multiple iPods to a single computer or a single iPod to multiple computers, activate manual syncing.



It's all the same. You can use syncOTunes to easily synchronise iTunes libraries between two networked computers.

After installing syncOTunes, select your local iTunes Music Library.xml file, and then select the same file on the remote computer across the network. Click on the Compare Libraries button to display the number of songs needing synchronisation and to select which songs and artists to copy (see the screenshot "It's all the same"). Clicking on the Copy Music Files button will then copy the appropriate files into the iTunes Music folder on each computer, which may take quite a while depending on the speed of your network. Once the files have been copied, click on the Import Into iTunes button to open iTunes on the local computer and begin the import process. Then you'll need to run the import manually in iTunes on the remote computer.

Non-networked computers. For syncing between distant computers – say, a home system and an office computer behind a firewall – using an iPod for transporting files can be more convenient. Because iTunes is set by default to autosync with iPods, be sure to switch to manual mode to avoid losing files.

To prevent the pirating of copyrighted files, Apple designed the iTunes synchronisation process to work only in one direction – moving files from a computer to an iPod. While Apple doesn't let you move files off of the iPod the same way you put them on, there are easy ways to do so. Whitney Young's Senuti 0.31 (see "Hot links") lets you copy single songs, songs grouped by artist or album, or entire playlists from an iPod into iTunes.

One downside of Senuti is its lack of support for copying meta-data such as ratings and play counts. Fortunately, many additional synchronisation utilities are available to fill the gap. Two that stand out from the crowd are Sci-Fi Hi-Fi's PodWorks 2.8.5 and crispSofties' iPod.iTunes 3.0.3 (see "Hot links"). Both programs can transfer metadata along with songs and playlists, but iPod.iTunes has the added feature of avoiding duplicate files by checking for files already in iTunes before synchronisation.

Another option is a new service called MP3tunes (see "Hot links"), which provides syncing tools and unlimited online storage space for all your music files for \$US40 a year. Remember that you can authorise only five computers at once to play songs purchased from the iTunes Music Store.

Syncing across platforms. Syncing iPods between different operating systems can be more complex. Officially, Apple doesn't

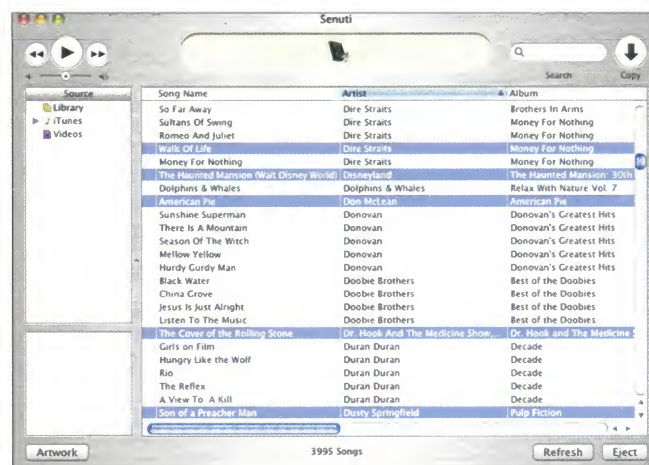
support using a Mac-formatted iPod on a Windows PC. However, cross-platform syncing is possible. Windows-formatted iPods make for the easiest cross-platform syncing: Macs are natively capable of accessing the FAT32 standard used on Windows iPods, so a Windows-formatted iPod will appear in iTunes on a Mac and can be accessed seamlessly (though transfer speed is likely to be slower than it would be with a Mac-formatted iPod).

Windows does not natively support Mac-formatted iPods, so syncing a Mac-formatted iPod to a Windows PC requires a third-party utility such as Mediafour's XPlay 2.2 (see "Hot links"). In addition to its own Windows-to-iPod syncing capabilities, XPlay 2.2 can be used in conjunction with iTunes. The program also lets you move files from an iPod to a PC.

Using the restore feature provided by Apple's iPod Updater, you can convert an iPod from Mac to Windows and vice versa. All data is erased from the device during the restore process, so use one of the methods mentioned earlier to back up any data unique to the iPod before you attempt a conversion.

With a little patience and the right settings and tools, even the most complicated group of iPods, Macs, and Windows PCs can make beautiful music together.

Pull it down. Senuti lets you copy the contents of your iPod into iTunes on your Mac.



By Helen Bradley

Merge data and save time

Merging traffic ahead

WHETHER you send letters and promotional pieces to clients or make name tags for office functions, getting names, addresses, and other unique information into boilerplate documents can be a serious pain. Microsoft Word's data-merging tools automate the process and let you do more-advanced tricks — for example, calculating discounts or including a special postscript only on letters to A-list clients.

Bring everything together. The key to merging data in Microsoft Word 2004 is the Data Merge Manager palette (Tools: Data Merge Manager). You'll find the tools you need here.

Create the document. The main document, which might be a letter, a flyer, or a label (for name tags), includes any stock text or images. Drag and drop special field codes onto the page to indicate where the custom data should appear (see the screenshot "The urge to merge").

Choose your merge type. Choose from three merge-type options. Use a Form Letters merge to create letters, flyers, and memos that you'll print and mail or send by e-mail. Use a Labels merge when you want to print multiple items on a single sheet of paper — address labels or name tags, for example. Use a Catalog merge to set up complex documents that have multiple items on a page, such as catalogues and phone directories.

Locate the data. Create or identify the data source. You can use data from any number of places — an Excel list, an AppleWorks word processing document, the Microsoft Office Address Book, a FileMaker Pro database, or a delimited ASCII text file. You can also create a custom data source and store it as a Word document.

Merge it. Use the Preview tools to check the merge. Then complete the process by printing or saving. If you use Microsoft Entourage as your default e-mail program, you can send the merged document to the recipients' e-mail addresses. No matter what you do, you can still use the data or the main document separately later on.

Try a fast form letter. To create a simple form letter — for instance, to advertise an upcoming event — first create a new blank document in Word and choose Tools: Data Merge Manager to open the palette containing Word's merge tools. Click on the Main Document disclosure triangle and then choose Form Letters from



Hot Links

www.microsoft.com/mac
Microsoft Mactopia

the Create pop-up menu. Type your letter into the Word document.

For the purposes of this example, we're going to put the addresses in a new Word document, instead of getting data from another source. Click on the Data Source disclosure triangle and choose New Data Source from the Get Data pop-up menu. The Create Data Source window will appear. You'll see a long list of field types under the heading Field Names In Header Row. Select any you don't need, and click on Remove Field Name. If you want to include data that's not in the list, type the name in the text field (for instance, EmailAddress) and click on Add Field Name. When you're done, click on OK. Give the data file a name and click on Save.

The Data Form window appears. Enter the name and address of the first person on your list. Click on Add New to add the second, and continue to add a few names. Click on OK to finish.

The fields you set up appear on the palette under the Merge Field header. Drag these fields into position on the letter. To assemble an address block, drag the Title and LastName fields onto one line and separate them with a space. On the next line, use Address1; on the following line, City, State, and PostCode, each separated by a space. You can use the fields multiple times in a letter — for example, the salutation might read Dear «Title» «LastName».

To check your letter, click on the Preview disclosure triangle. Click on the first icon, View Merged Data, to preview your letter with information from the first record in your data document. Use the Next Record and Previous Record arrows to check the other records. To see the letter with field codes again, click on the last icon, View Field Codes.

To complete the merge, click on the Merge disclosure triangle and then on one of the icons that is revealed. Note that the third icon, Merge To E-mail, sends the document pages to Entourage as e-mail messages. (To do this, you must include the recipients' e-mail addresses in the data file. You must also select the field containing this data and type a subject line before e-mailing.)

Tackle tougher tasks. Try these advanced options for more-complex jobs.

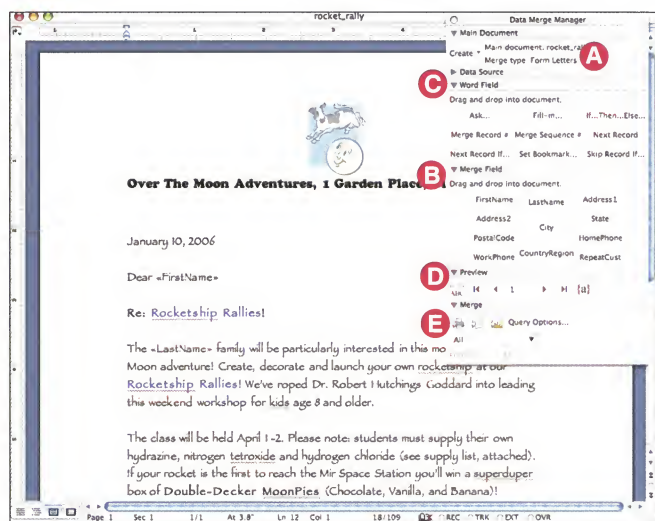
Customise on-the-fly. What if your merge letter will be used repeatedly but will include some updated information, such as a

class's date and time or the details of a special offer? In a case like that, use an Ask field, which lets you add data at merge time. Say you want to include the name of the product that's on special this month. In the palette, click on the Word Field disclosure triangle and drag an Ask field to the top of your document. (This ensures that Word will ask for this data as the merge begins.) The Insert Word Field: Ask dialog box opens.

In the Bookmark text field, type a name — for example, Offer (you'll use this in a minute). Then in the Prompt field, type your request: Please type the name of this month's special. Next, in the Default Bookmark Text field, type the default text that Word will use if you or another user — perhaps a salesperson — doesn't provide any new information. Select the Ask Once option and click on OK. Click on OK again when the prompt dialog box appears with your question and default text.

Now it's time to tell Word where to put this information when it's received. Click where the data should appear in the document,

The urge to merge. Don't bother entering data by hand! Whether you're creating name tags, phone lists, or form letters, Word's Data Merge Manager can help you do it fast. Pick your merge type A. Drag and drop fields B into your document. Designate the data source, whether it's a list of names and addresses or a complex database C. Preview your merged documents D, and print, e-mail, or save the finished product E.



and choose Insert: Field. In the Field dialog box, delete the current contents of the text field and type REF bookmark name. In other words, if your bookmark's name is Offer, you should type REF Offer. Click on OK. When you merge your document, Word will ask you to provide the data, you'll type it in the dialog box and click on OK, and it will appear in each merged letter at this spot.

Do the maths. Word's merge tools can perform mathematics, which is particularly handy if you're creating anything involving numbers. For example, if you want to create a letter offering customers a discount on outstanding accounts paid in full this month, you could include a special field that displays an amount equal to ten percent of the outstanding amount, which is shown elsewhere in the letter. Let's assume that the outstanding amount is stored in a field called Outstanding. Click where the result of the calculation should appear. Press $\text{⌘}+\text{F9}$ to insert a set of field codes. Type $= \text{Outstanding} * 0.1$ inside the curly brackets and then click outside them. Word makes the calculation individually for each record.

Add some logic. One of the most useful tricks Word has up its sleeve is If...Then...Else fields. Use these logical calculations to make choices when you're creating merged documents. For instance, you can set up one of these fields to check whether the letter's recipient lives in NSW and, if so, insert a mention of the exorbitant stamp duty in the letter. If the recipient lives somewhere else, say nothing or add a different comment.

To do this, go to the Data Merge Manager palette and click on the Word Field disclosure triangle. Drag the If...Then...Else field into place on your letter. The Insert Word Field: IF dialog box appears. Set up your conditions using its pop-up menus. For our example, you'd select State from the Field Name pop-up menu; choose Equal To from the Comparison pop-up menu; and type NSW into the Compare To text field. In the Insert This Text field, type the text that you want Word to insert if the condition is met. If you want something else to appear in your document if the condition isn't met, type it in the Otherwise Insert This Text field.

Data merging has always been a useful and powerful tool for office productivity. The next time you're performing a repetitive task, ask yourself whether a data merge might save you time and effort.

By Sean McNamara.

Echo point

Help folder

We answer our readers' questions

Each month Channelworx (1300 883 882) gives a copy of Dantz Retrospect Desktop (valued at \$259) to the Australian Macworld reader who submits the most intriguing Help folder query.

Retrospect Desktop is the #1 home and small office backup software for Macintosh. Don't rely on manual drag-and-drop to protect your data — it misses important files, is performed sporadically at best, and cannot restore older or deleted files. Retrospect allows you to easily set up complete, scheduled backups of three networked Macintosh, Windows, or Red Hat Linux desktop and notebook computers. Client licenses are available to protect additional computers. The product CD contains both Retrospect 6.0 for backing up to Mac OS X (10.1.5 though 10.3 "Panther") and Retrospect 5.1 for backing up to Mac OS 9.

Send your query to matthew.powell@niche.com.au for consideration for Help folder. Include your full mailing address to be eligible to win Retrospect Desktop.

All queries and solutions are the sole property of Niche Media.

■ Sean McNamara is a Sydney-based consultant trading as MacAssist.



Hot Links

www.channelworx.com.au
Query of the month sponsor
www.microsoft.com/mac
Tip of the month sponsor

www.grc.com
Test your computer's security
personalpages.tds.net/~brian_hill/flyingbuttress.html
The program formerly known as BrickWall
docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=301183
KnowledgeBase article on AppleTalk changes
www.grouplogic.com/products/extreme/overview.cfm
ExtremeZ-IP
gimp-print.sourceforge.net/
Bring out the gimp
docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=107418
Printer troubleshooting for AirPort
docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=303124
Startup keys for Intel Macs



■ I would like to know if I can stop my computer from replying back to ICMP Echoes. I'm using 10.3.9 at the moment and I have the firewall active but I noticed through the "Shields Up" test online (see "Hot links") that my computer replies back to these echoes and I would like to be able to stop this.

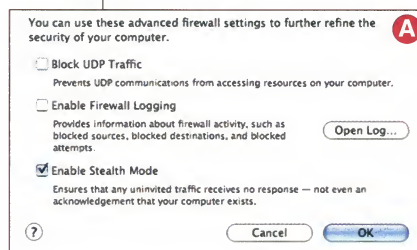
Paul Hadlow
via internet

Wanting to strengthen the security of your computer is an admirable aim, Paul, so let's see what we can do to help.

First, it may not be your Mac replying to the ICMP Echo Requests — if you have a router (or modem/router), that will be the device replying to the requests (your computer is invisible to the internet unless the router is configured to pass unrequested packets to it).

The easiest way to determine which device is replying to the requests is to stop the Mac's replying to these requests temporarily — to do this, open the Terminal application (in /Applications/Utilities/), then type in `sudo ipfw add deny icmp from any to any`

Your Mac will ask for your admin password, then respond



with confirmation of the addition of this firewall rule by listing its number and the rule, as follows:
`12290 deny icmp from any to any`

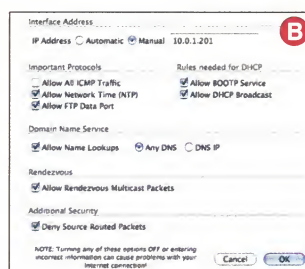
At this point, try running Shields Up again and see if it still reports your Mac as replying to the ICMP echo requests. If the GRC web site still shows replies, you'll need to find out if your router can be configured to not reply to the requests.

If the website shows the replies as going unanswered, you have a few options:

- you could try and figure out how to do a StartupItem to block the ICMP Echo Request replies;
- you could upgrade to Mac OS X v10.4, which has a "stealth" feature which prevents these replies **A** or
- you could utilise a program like Flying Buttress (formerly called BrickWall (see "Hot links") to use its stealth mode **B**.

The first option is the cheapest, but requires getting into deep recesses of the System — which is not necessarily advisable when there are the other two options available — and, in fact, Flying Buttress will install the StartupItem for you if you decide to go down that route. (Changing the firewall rules with Flying Buttress will disable the ability to configure the firewall settings from Apple's System Preferences).

One way or another, you'll end up masking your computer's presence on the 'net.



Key change

2

■ I recently bought a new Mac Mini, and copied over my Mail files from my older Mac so that I'd have access to all my e-mails. No problems there.

But for some reason, each time I log in, Mail asks for my Keychain password. Any ideas on how I can just get it to accept it once and for all and

not have to type it in every time I turn on the computer?

*Steve Younis
via internet*

You may have been hit with Apple's changeover from having a user's main keychain named after the user's shortname to it being named "login". There are also other times when the whole keychain thing can go a bit pear-shaped (especially when changing machines).

The first thing I would do is set Mail to not save your account password/s — open Mail, choose Preferences from the Mail menu,

click on Accounts, then delete the password in your account **A**. This will make sure that when you add the account passwords later, they'll be freshly added.

Next, open the Keychain Access utility (in /Applications /Utilities/), then choose Keychain First Aid from the Keychain Access menu — the First Aid process can verify your keychain, and, if you repair it, the keychain will be set to unlock on login, and not to lock automatically. So, let's go ahead with the repair, and then restart your Mac to make sure the settings take.

Next, open Mail and re-open



Mail and re-enter you account password. You shouldn't be asked to give your Keychain password, as the Keychain is now set to unlock at login and stay unlocked. At that point, you should be up and checking your Mail without being asked for the Keychain Password.

Looking through Windows

3

■ I purchased Mac OS X v10.4 and installed it on my G4 and upgraded from Mac OS X v10.3. Guess what? I can't connect to our Window NT Server — I keep getting a message of "Connection failed. This file server uses an incompatible version of the AFP protocol. You cannot connect to it." Yeah, right!

I need to connect to the server as that's where I save all my work, and I can't afford to upgrade the server at this stage. I'd be happy to go back to Mac OS X v10.3 if I have to, but of course all my files have been upgraded to 10.4 and I'd have to start from scratch.

Can I somehow make Mac OS X v10.4 communicate with NT or do I really have to go back and rebuild from scratch at the Mac OS X v10.3 level.

Save me, please.

What have I learnt so far? Do a save and install rather than go like a bull at a gate and overwrite everything.

*Jan Walters
Lower King, WA*

What you've come up against is that Apple has disabled AFP (Apple Filing Protocol) over AppleTalk access to file servers — all access is now handled over TCP/IP (see "Hot links"). Unfortunately, the Services for Macintosh (SFM) component of Windows servers is based on AFP over AppleTalk.

Doing an Archive and Install (without preserving Users and Network settings) would not have helped you very much as it's not a very straightforward process to re-instate an archived System.

There are a few ways around the problem, each with their own pros and cons.

First, you could go back to Mac OS X v10.3 to regain this functionality — by doing an archive and install and choosing to preserve the user and network settings, you'll keep most of your

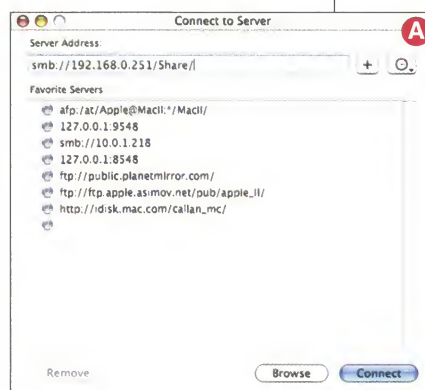
user and network settings when you go back. However, as you say, you may lose some of the things you've already set up in Mac OS X v10.4.

Second, you could use the built-in SMB (Windows file sharing) client in Mac OS X to access the file server in that way. Windows NT Server supports SMB connections over TCP/IP, and Tiger is more than happy to make these connections. However, you may experience some differences in how the server was accessed in the past or how the file sharing behaves. You could turn off SFM and then connect to the server — it will appear in the Network section of the Finder. You could also use

the Connect to Server option in the Go menu in the Finder and type in the server's URL **A**.

Third, you could install ExtremeZ-IP on the Windows server (see "Hot links") — I've seen this product give very good access to Mac clients on Windows servers by allowing AFP connections over TCP/IP. It happily co-exists with the Windows server programs, and actually gives significant performance gains over the built-in Services for Macintosh.

Unfortunately, it comes with a price tag — \$US1345. The GroupLogic web site also gives comparisons of ExtremeZ-IP vs SFM and SMB.





Microsoft Reader tip

■ Want to print an e-mail in Mail, but would first like to edit it? Perhaps change the font, size or style of the text? One way is to drag the e-mail (or a copy of it) into the Drafts folder. From there it is possible to open and edit it as you would any other draft message.

One thing to note is that the date and time of the message then changes to the time of editing — so when you print, this will show, and not the date and time of the original message.

If you want to record the original date and time, you could copy this from the original message (before opening and editing), and

paste into the body of the edited message.

*Hilary McKay
Crafers, SA*

Each month, Microsoft gives a free Notebook Optical Mouse valued at \$70 to the Australian Macworld reader who submits the best tip. Sized for mobility and designed to be noticed, Microsoft Notebook Optical

Mouse 3000 offers great comfort for either hand and is always good to go. E-mail your tip, together with your name, address and phone number, to matthew.powell@niche.com.au. All reader tips published become the sole property of Niche Media.

Beginners start here

Users and Groups

Mac OS X is, at heart, a Unix-based operating system, and Unix has been multi-user for decades. It's not like the Multiple Users feature of Mac OS 9, which was tacked on top of what was a single-user system.

Users can be of several flavours — admin users (who can authenticate to perform system tasks), non-admin users (who can use the resources of the machine and modify their own settings without modifying system-level settings), and system users (used to allow programs to run with a limited set of privileges).

A hard thing to get used to is the fact that Mac OS X is not as forgiving as previous versions of the Mac OS as far as the placement of files and folders is concerned. You used to be able

to move and rename your System Folder, you could place just about anything you wanted anywhere on your HD, you could delete just about anything you wanted to — you had a lot of freedom in this regard.

Mac OS X has inherited the Unix idea of a Home folder — a folder in which the user is free to do just about anything. It's where the user's personal documents and settings are meant to be stored. All Home folders are in the Users folder found on the first (root) level of the HD **A** — the currently logged-in user's folder is indicated with the home icon.

In Mac OS X, if you venture far outside your Home folder, you will often be asked to authenticate to make the changes (if you're allowed to

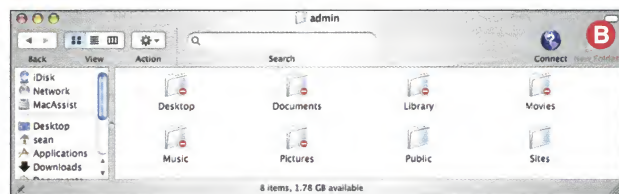
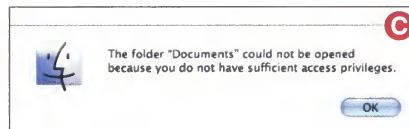
make the change at all!). For example, if you go into another user's home folder, you'll have very limited access **B** and **C**.

Having multiple users helps to improve the security of the machine and a user's data. If many system-level actions have to be authenticated, it can help the user to be aware of the security implications of what they're doing; non-admin users can only do so much damage (usually to their own data only); system programs running as users which have very limited access to the system files prevent them from being exploited by malicious code. From the user level, a multi-user system allows each user to have their own set of settings, bookmarks, music in iTunes, photos in iPhoto.

One important thing to remember is that even a machine used by only a single user is, as far as the system software is concerned, a multi-user system which has only had one user installed on it so far. So from the get-go, Mac OS X will treat all a user's actions in the context of the actions' effects on a multi-user system.

Startup keys addendum.

With the release of Intel-based Macs, Apple has made a list of startup key combinations specific to the new machines — see "Hot links" for Apple's official list. It is conspicuously missing the keys to enter into its new firmware environment, EFI (Extensible Firmware Interface), which replaces Open Firmware in the Intel-based Macs. It is unlikely most users will need to get into the EFI environment.



YOUR GUIDE TO DIGITAL
MUSIC ON THE GO!

PLAYER

The digital music revolution has arrived, and with it a plethora of music players, accessories and associated lifestyle products. *Player*, from the team that brings you *Australian Macworld*, is your guide to the revolution. Launching in AMW's 04.2006 issue with an iPod special, *Player* features tutorials, commentary and buyers' guides to help you understand the technology, learn cool tricks and make the right choices in hardware and software. Future issues will cover home systems, car audio and the myriad portable players on the market.

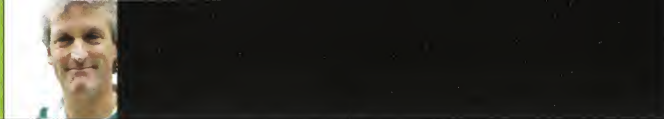
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Hot Links

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Apple's new podcasting toolkit

Do it yourself

ALTHOUGH Mac users already have iTunes and GarageBand to listen to and produce podcasts, there's other stuff out there, and if you're going to get serious about the revolution it may pay you to get acquainted. All three titles this month have the goods to get you from beginner to podcaster pro.

Podcasting-The Do-It-Yourself Guide by podcast geek Todd Cochrane puts four types of people in the frame:

First, docile folk who just want to find out what podcasting is all about, and maybe listen to something interesting on a computer or an MP3 player. By the way, podcasting doesn't mean you need an iPod. Like you don't really need a Mac ;-)

Second, novice podcasters with a limited budget.

Third, anyone who wants to take these basic podcasts to the next level by building a professional home studio and refining production quality.

Fourth, companies who want to find out what's happening in the podcasting community, and perhaps source podcasters who will market their brand.

The first chapter looks at the history of podcasting, the types of shows available and some of the leaders in the field. The next two chapters show you the podcatching software that's out there and how to use it to find podcasts. Then two chapters on DIY podcasting using basic audio gear form an introduction to building a semi-professional studio. Here you'll look at different types of microphone, audio processing gear, the actual recording of your podcast and post-production techniques. Subsequent chapters deal with hosting solutions, promoting your podcast and publishing it on the internet. As a nice counterpoint to the intro, the final chapter looks forward and back to wonder how podcasting might impact on traditional radio and the possible effects of future commercialisation.

Cochrane has covered pretty well all bases and his book thoroughly merits the DIY tag in the title. The geek factor is there in his obvious enthusiasm for the subject but it's under control.

Podcast Solutions — The Complete Guide To Podcasting

actually contains a geek warning in the introduction: "We're not geeks and this isn't a geek book". Instead of listing every available podcasting product, the authors deploy their combined experience to select the best hardware and software combinations to get you started. The accompanying CD

contains a modest collection of useful programs, mostly demo versions, to help you listen to and create podcasts. For Mac users there's Audacity, Audio Hijack Pro, DSP Quattro, Feeder, iPodder, Ozone and Peak. The book follows a similar path to the previous title,

beginning with a general discussion of podcasting, and then leads from listening to the work of others to planning and producing your own. The technical detail is a little more elaborate but carefully massaged into understandability, true to the authors' initial promise. After mastering the necessary techniques to launch your final production into the airwaves you will learn how to promote your product and perhaps make money out of it. Appendixes contain a glossary and a list of useful web sites. More matter-of-fact than the *DIY Guide*, *The Complete Guide* is pretty well just that and will suit earnest folk with a technical bent who don't need to get overexcited to make stuff happen.

Podcasting For Dummies is, ironically, probably the most technical and detailed of the three titles. In their early days the *Dummies* books were a breakthrough in attempting to translate difficult, often technical material into a form that average people could understand. The concept proved so popular that the majority of teach-yourself books for the general market have now adopted the same policy of paying homage to the non-technical reader. To some readers today, *Dummies* books try too hard to be nice and have an annoying tendency to be übercute. Millions of others still love 'em.

For starters there's a two-page cheat sheet with podcast artwork parameters, tips for preparing for an interview, suggested settings for MP3 compression and a list of popular recording, audio editing and blogging software. In contrast to the other two titles this book dives straight into the production side of things, without worrying too much about how things came to be or what everyone else in the podcasting world is doing. This is about you, the podcaster, and follows a thoroughly professional approach down to the minutiae of interviewing techniques, clock management and writing professional show notes. As a recording and post-production tool GarageBand has a bigger say in this book as well.

If you're not a Dummies-spitter this is a seriously useful book. ☞

Keith has been a Mac addict since 1984 and still can't fathom why there is anyone who isn't.

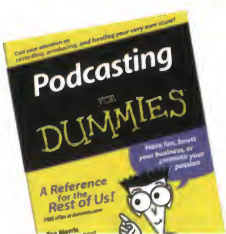
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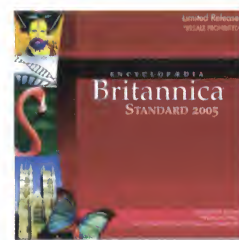
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Ratings key

Outstanding	★★★★★
Very good	★★★★
Good	★★★
Flawed	★★
Unacceptable	★
Dangerous	●

AMW lab: VoIP hardware

Cheap phone calls becoming reality

THE price you are charged by Telstra (and other telcos) when you make a phone call no longer has a direct relationship with the costs involved in providing the service. So-called "local calls" are charged at a fixed low price and telcos know that governments would fall if they tried to increase charges or switch to a variable-cost model. Instead they introduced mobile phones. The price of a national phone call is historically based on the distance between the two parties, despite the fact that modern networks care only about the amount of data being moved, and not a jot about the location.

The price you pay for an international call depends primarily on the charges levied by the receiving telco, rather than being under the control of the party making the call, despite the whole process being totally automatic and no longer requiring an army of multi-lingual telephone operators. Changing the way we pay for phone calls would probably cause more unction in the community than changing the closing times of the pubs, so the telcos leave well enough alone, and hope we keep paying the bill.

However, the internet offers a new model for connecting two places together – based on the data you send, instead of the distance between the parties. The telcos are already using the internet to route their voice traffic around the country and around the planet, which means the technology required is well known, and if they're doing it, then surely it must be cheaper. The answer for the average user is yes, you can probably save money by using Voice over Internet Protocol, commonly abbreviated as VoIP, as long as you regularly make calls outside the "local call" zone.

The fee for a local call over VoIP is typically around 10c which, although cheaper than the standard fee offered by Telstra, can often be beaten by bundled deals and "capped" plans. However, most VoIP service provider "plans" include 10c un-timed calls to anywhere in Australia, at any time of day or night, which is definitely much better than the telcos' STD charges. If you need to make frequent STD calls on a daily basis, a VoIP service could pay for itself in less than a week.

To make VoIP work you need a broadband connection – which an increasing number of people already have – some special software or hardware – or a combination of both – to turn your voice into a data stream and to decode the incoming bits into the voice from the other end of the line, and a VoIP service provider to make the connection between you and the other party. You don't need to choose the same VoIP provider as your ISP, and in fact, you probably won't be able to do so if your ISP is also a telco. Most telcos, including Telstra, have announced plans for VoIP services but at the time of writing few had delivered.

Making VoIP calls with your Macintosh has been possible for a number of years, using "free" software such as Skype, and you can still do that today, as long as you don't mind sitting in front of your computer while you talk. The service is only "free" when chatting to other people who are also using Skype.

Test drive.

We evaluate, rigorously test and give detailed assessments of new-release software and hardware.



■ Type	engin Voice Box Series 2	V100 Analogue Telephone Adaptor	V300 VoIP Telephone Adaptor/Router	VoIP Broadband Router DVG-1402S	VoIP Telephone DPH-120S
■ Rating	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★
■ Pros	True plug-and-play setup, incorporates landline	True plug-and-play setup	Incorporates landline, QoS function	QoS function, two VoIP phones	Standalone desk phone
■ Cons	Locked to engin VoIP service	Locked to MyNetFone	None really	No landline function	Only a VoIP phone
■ Ports	LAN, Phone, PSTN	LAN, Phone	WAN, LAN x3, Phone, PSTN	WAN, LAN x 4, Phone x 2	LAN x 2
■ RRP	\$149 after \$100 rebate offer	\$129	\$199	\$250	\$188
■ Distributor	engin 02 9004 4533	Netcomm Australia 02 9424 2000	Netcomm Australia 02 9424 2000	D-Link Australia 02 8899 1861	D-Link Australia 02 8899 1861
■ Reviewer	Ian Yates				
■ Hot links	www.engin.com.au	www.netcomm.com.au	www.netcomm.com.au	www.dlink.com.au	www.dlink.com.au



People with friends, relatives or business partners in other cities or other countries have been using Skype, despite the restrictive geeky nature of the process, because the cost-savings have significantly outweighed the inconvenience. Using your Macintosh as a phone was never going to appeal universally – people want to use their phone as a phone and their Mac as a Mac. That can now happen because over the last year or so the VoIP market has exploded, and there is now a bewildering array of both products and service providers.

What's available. VoIP technology ranges from software only solutions, all the way to integrated ADSL/router/WiFi/VoIP boxes which provide everything you could possibly need for your broadband dalliance in a single box. In between the two extremes are phones with VoIP smarts built-in, analogue telephone adapters (ATAs) which let you use a standard phone as a VoIP phone, as well as router/VoIP boxes and router/WiFi/VoIP boxes. What you decide to buy will most likely depend on what you already have on your desk.

If you don't yet have broadband, the everything-in-one devices might appeal, since that means less clutter on the desk and fewer



cables to untangle and cross-connect. If you've already got broadband, but no wireless, then you might like to acquire a VoIP router with WiFi built-in. If you already have a totally networked abode complete with WiFi, then a plain ATA will do the job just fine. Total geeks will already have a USB phone handset and Skype.

AMW lab took a look at three ATAs, from MyNetFone, engin and iiNet; three VoIP Broadband Routers from D-Link, Netgear and Netcomm; and two ADSL/WiFi/VoIP Broadband Routers from Belkin and Billion. The ATAs are offered directly by the VoIP service providers and are "locked" to their service – being locked to a particular provider seems to be the price you pay for geek-free setup.

With any of the ATAs, all that is required is to plug Ethernet into a port, plug a phone into another port, apply power and register online at the provider's web site. This is by far the fastest and simplest way to get into VoIP, as long as you already have broadband and some sort of router. Even if you don't already have a router, it may be simpler to acquire a cheap broadband router and an ATA device and start making calls. You won't need to worry about compatibility issues as these ATAs don't need a particular flavour of PC, just a web browser.

MyNetFone uses Netcomm hardware, engin uses Sipura and iiNet uses Belkin, but each provider also has a range of other VoIP devices on offer.

The MyNetFone/Netcomm unit provides for a single VoIP phone, the iiNet/Belkin allows two phones and the engin/Sipura has provision for your regular landline to be part of the process. This is particularly useful if you don't want a "special" VoIP phone that you have to remember to use for long distance calls. With the engin/Sipura you plug your existing landline into one port and your existing phone into the other port, then just use your phone exactly the way you were using it before VoIP arrived. If someone calls you on your regular landline, the phone

USB VoIP Phone UVP-001 Comsol	TA612V Broadband Voice Adapter	Broadband Voice Modem/Router F1PI241EGau	Broadband Voice Adapter F1PG200ENau	BiPAC 7402VGP VoIP ADSL2+ Modem/Router
⚡⚡⚡	⚡⚡⚡	⚡⚡⚡	⚡⚡⚡	⚡⚡⚡½
Easier to use with Skype than headsets	Usually comes with VoIP provider bundle	Everything in one box, incorporates landline	Plug and play setup Locked to iiNet, no landline function	Everything in one box, incorporates landline
Needs Mac/PC to operate	No landline function	Locked to iiNet		None really
USB	WAN, LAN, Phone x 2	ADSL2+, LAN x 4, WiFi Phone x 2, PSTN	LAN, Phone x 2	ADSL2+, LAN x 3, WiFi, Phone x 2, PSTN
\$60	\$149	Bundled with iiNet service	Bundled with iiNet service	\$299
Comsol 02 9352 0000	Netgear Australia 02 8448 2072	Belkin Australia 02 4372 8614	Belkin Australia 02 4372 8614	Billion 08 8322 9544
www.comsol.com.au	www.netgear.com.au	www.belkin.com/au	www.belkin.com/au	www.billion.com.au



rings and you answer. When you make a call, VoIP takes over to save you money. If the power fails or your broadband goes down, your phone “fails over” to the original landline so you can still make calls, albeit at higher rates.

We also took a look at the D-Link DPH-120S VoIP phone, which combines a desktop handset with an internal ATA. This unit will appeal to anyone who wants a standard office phone, complete with standalone phone book and hands-free operation, whilst taking advantage of cheap VoIP calls. The DPH-120S isn’t “locked” to a particular provider, and once connected you can easily see the IP number it has acquired and point your browser to that address to complete the simple setup process.

This phone is designed to sit alongside your Macintosh on the desk, and it has two Ethernet ports to make that possible. You take the existing Ethernet out of your Mac and plug it into the phone, then plug the supplied Ethernet cable from the phone’s second port into your Macintosh. For those who like to wander around while talking, our attention was drawn to the ZyXel P2000W, a VoIP phone with built-in ATA which requires no cables – it connects via WiFi. However, we were unable to obtain a review unit.

Moving up the complexity slope we encounter VoIP Broadband Routers. These devices look very much like standard broadband routers with an Ethernet port labelled WAN to plug your ADSL modem into, a few extra Ethernet ports labelled LAN to directly connect nearby Macs, with the inclusion of one or more ports for a standard telephone handset. This can be anything from a plain old Telstra 200 handset to a fancy cordless DECT phone.

Setting up. Choosing one of these devices from your local store requires only that you check for “browser-based” setup, as very few devices have specific software for the Macintosh, but some can only be configured with a Windows PC.



The three on test all came with CDs, but the CDs only had copies of the user manual, not configuration software – for that you use Safari or your favourite web browser. Each of these routers had the usual browser-based configuration server built-in and getting started required no more than plugging them into power, inserting the new router between the ADSL modem and the Macintosh, and typing the IP address provided in the user guide into Safari.

Because these routers aren’t “locked” into a particular VoIP service provider, you have to enter the details manually into the appropriate form before you can start making calls, but the process isn’t particularly onerous, and takes only a few minutes. Although not “locked,” the Netgear TA612V arrived pre-configured to work with VoIP provider BBPGlobal, including \$25 credit, so if you are happy with that choice, you only need to register on the web, in the same manner as the ATA devices.





High-end. At the top of the home-office/small-office VoIP tree are the everything-in-one devices which try to cater for all your network needs, until somebody invents another service that can be squeezed into bytes and squirted down the information highway. This will probably next happen when video-on-demand achieves prime-time status on broadband connections. Until then these ADSL/WiFi/VoIP routers reduce the number of devices between the phone socket and your Macintosh to just one entity and the minimum number of cables.

The Billion BiPAC 7402VGP was not locked to any particular provider and setup was similar to the other routers on test. The Belkin router is locked to iiNet/OzEmail, so if you like that provider's plans, setup is simply a matter of connect and register. Both units provide for two VoIP phones and also integrate your existing phone line for incoming calls and emergency use in the event of power failure. Each of these routers also shipped with an ADSL line filter, saving a few dollars and another trip to the computer shop.

The router-based VoIP devices also support Quality of Service options, which are designed to provide priority for the voice



traffic when the broadband link is being used at the same time for browsing and/or downloading. However, true QoS won't be realised until the ISPs start supporting the service, guaranteeing end-to-end priority for VoIP calls – no doubt at a premium price. Expect that to happen as the number of VoIP users ramps up and the telcos start to compete to get back their lost landline revenue.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. When we first toyed with VoIP phones the quality was questionable and the pops clicks and crackles reminiscent of war-time radio calls between spies and their masters. A couple of scant years later and 90 percent of calls made via VoIP are indistinguishable from regular landline calls. However, you will still encounter the occasional echo, sometimes a bit of time lag and, rarely, a complete dropout. For that reason, even the VoIP vendors recommend that you keep your standard landline for emergency calls.

Despite the shortcomings, VoIP is technology that is ready for mainstream adoption, and nobody could seriously argue over the savings on the monthly phone bill. If you just want to see what all the fuss is about on a minimal budget, try the software-only solutions on offer from MyNetFone and others. If you are already convinced, and don't want to enlist the help of a geeky neighbour, jump straight in with one of the ATA devices – we liked the engin/Sipura unit, because it incorporates your existing phone and makes the process almost transparent.

If you really like having a standard phone with large buttons, voicemail, conference calls, hands-free operation and an internal phone book, then the D-Link DPH-120S would look the part on any home-office or corporate desktop. If you need a new router, or you are stepping up to ADSL2, then the Billion all-in-one unit will reward an audience which isn't averse to entering a few parameters into a web page, with fast broadband access, two VoIP phones, integration of your existing landline and the bonus of WiFi to the rest of the house or office. ☞



	17-inch iMac Intel Core Duo/1.83GHz	20-inch iMac Intel Core Duo/2GHz
■ Type	Intel-based consumer desktop	
■ Rating	■■■■	■■■■
■ Pros	Dual-core; large-cache Intel processor delivers performance boost for Apple software and other native applications; Rosetta ensures compatibility with most PowerPC programs; elegant, space-saving design; built-in iSight; mini-DVI port with extended-desktop support; includes iLife '06	Dual-core; large-cache Intel processor delivers performance boost for Applesoftware and other native applications; Rosetta ensures compatibility with most PowerPC programs; elegant, space-saving design; big, beautiful screen; built-in iSight; mini-DVI port with extended-desktop support; includes iLife '06
■ Cons	Significant speed penalty for non-native software; no support for Classic applications; no productivity software included; users can no longer do routine hardware repairs	Significant speed penalty for non-native software; no support for Classic applications; no productivity software included; users can no longer do routine hardware repairs
■ RRP	\$1999	\$2649
■ Manufacturer	Apple Computer	
■ Distributor	Apple Australia 133 622	
■ Reviewer	Henry Norr	
■ Hot links	www.apple.com/au/imac	www.apple.com/au/intel

Core Duo iMacs

They aren't twice as fast, but they're plenty fast at most tasks

WHAT'S an Intel chip doing in an iMac? Almost exactly the same things PowerPC chips do in older models — just faster on some tasks and, for now, slower on others.

As Steve Jobs noted when he rolled out the new iMacs, they have a lot in common with their G5-based predecessors: the same strikingly elegant, space-saving design; the same basic features; and the same prices.

Most important, the software on new iMacs looks and feels just like what you're used to. Apple has provided new versions of Mac OS X (currently 10.4.4) and its iLife apps that run on the Intel processors, but to the user they're identical to the PowerPC versions for other Macs. And most third-party programs written for OS X on PowerPC also run on the new machines, thanks to a clever technology that Apple calls Rosetta.

The big difference, in theory, is speed. According to Apple's benchmark tests, the Intel iMacs are roughly twice to three times as fast as the last G5 models. Macworld Lab's real-world tests, however, reveal a more complex reality, in which speed varies widely depending on what software you're using.

Over time, as programs are updated, the Intel-based iMacs should gain a wider performance lead over their PowerPC-based predecessors. If you're thinking of buying now, stop to consider the tradeoffs.

Intel inside. Intel's advanced manufacturing technology enables the company to put two complete processors on a single slice of silicon — that's where the Duo part of the name comes from. (Intel has also announced new single-engine chips called — you guessed it—Core Solos, which might show up in future iBooks or other Mac models.) PowerPC maker IBM used the same dual-core approach to increase performance in the G5 processors Apple currently ships in its Dual and Quad Power Mac models, but those chips use too much power and generate too much heat for the close quarters of an iMac or a laptop — one big reason Apple switched from PowerPC to Intel processors.

With clock speeds of 1.83GHz in the 17-inch iMac and 2GHz in the 20-inch model, the Core Duos actually run a shade slower than the 1.9GHz and 2.1GHz G5s in the previous iMacs. The new chips perform better, though, not only because they have two processing engines but also because they include 2MB of Level 2 cache memory — four times as much as the previous iMac G5s had.

The off-processor memory in the new iMacs is also fast — in fact, at 667MHz, it's the fastest main memory ever shipped in a Mac, faster even than that of the Power Mac Quad. (Technically speaking, it's PC2-5300 DDR2 SDRAM, and it comes on a notebook-style module called a SODIMM.) There are two easily accessible memory slots, one of which is filled with a 512MB module in the standard configurations, and the system can accommodate a maximum of 2GB.

The iMacs' video subsystem now features the Radeon X1600, ATI Technology's latest midrange graphics processor, replacing the aging X600. In both iMac configurations 128MB of video RAM remains standard, but you can order the 20-inch model with 256MB.

In addition, both new models have a mini-DVI port through which, with the appropriate adapter, you can attach a VGA, S-Video,



or composite monitor, or a DVI display such as an Apple Cinema Display (up to 23 inches only). You're no longer limited to mirroring, either — the new models also support extended-desktop mode.

Apple outside. In other respects, the new iMacs match the iMac G5s introduced last October. As before, the two models come standard with, respectively, 160GB and 250GB hard drives (both 7,200-rpm Serial ATA devices), and both have an 8x SuperDrive with double-layer support. For communication, AirPort Extreme (now with support for 802.11a, 802.11b, and 802.11g), Bluetooth 2.0, and Gigabit Ethernet are built in, but a modem is not. The computer has three USB 2.0 and two FireWire 400 ports. Its audio jacks support both analogue and digital optical output, but only analogue input. Apple's wired Mighty Mouse is included.

Two nifty features added to the previous iMacs, the compact Apple Remote Control and the iSight camera built into the bezel above the screen, are also unchanged.

Compatibility and performance. All the Apple software that ships with the new iMacs is fully native on the Intel processors — that is, the code was recompiled for the new chips, so there's no need for translation or emulation. (Some of the third-party applications bundled with the iMac are not fully native; others are.) Only a handful of third-party developers, however, had native versions of their programs available in time for the iMac launch. Major companies such as Adobe and Microsoft weren't even ready to announce target dates for updates of their programs. Apple said it wouldn't have Universal versions of its own pro applications (Aperture, Final Cut Studio, and Logic Pro) until March 31.

By late January, the number of available Universal programs — that is, programs with native code for both PowerPC and Intel processors — was approaching 500, according to Apple's count (see "Hot links"), but many of them were relatively minor programs or shareware utilities.

Even without Universal updates, most up-to-date Mac software runs on the new iMacs anyway, because Rosetta, a feature built into OS X for Intel Macs, automatically translates PowerPC instructions into their Intel equivalents. On the whole, it works amazingly well, but there are some important caveats.

First, Classic software — programs written for Mac OS 9 and earlier — won't run on the new iMacs. Neither will third-party preference panes and kernel extensions for OS X — categories that include many device drivers, such as those for Microsoft's keyboards and mice. Many PowerPC Mac games, Microsoft's Virtual PC, current versions of Apple's pro apps, and other programs that require very high performance or depend on precise timing, don't start up at all or run hopelessly slowly on Rosetta.

Second, programs that do run on the translator generally work at roughly half the speed they deliver on PowerPC processors. With today's hardware, that's not nearly as bad as it may sound — after all, half of 2GHz is 1GHz, and most programs run acceptably to most users on 1GHz machines. In fact, I scarcely noticed the slowdown when using Microsoft Office on the Intel iMacs; Photoshop CS2 was less responsive than on recent PowerPC Macs, but not painfully so.

On the other side of the ledger, the new iMacs definitely feel quicker when you're running native applications, whether from Apple or other developers. Though you'll rarely if ever experience Apple's touted "2 to 3x faster" performance, booting up is much faster, web pages visited with Safari snap to the screen,

Benchmarks

UNIVERSAL	iMac Core Duo/2GHz	iMac Core Duo/1.83GHz	iMac G5/2.1GHz
Startup	0:25	0:25	0:46
iMovie 6: Apply B&W Effect	1:45	1:54	3:11
iMovie 6: Apply Rain Effect	2:05	2:12	2:43
iPhoto 6: Import 100 Files	0:53	0:55	1:22
iPhoto 6: Export to QuickTime	1:08	1:12	1:31
iPhoto 6: Export to File	2:55	3:06	2:40
Finder: Create Zip Archive	2:32	2:44	2:53
Doom 3 v1.3.1303: Universal Beta Demo 1	35.9	27.3	17.0
iTunes 6.0.2: MP3 Encode	1:14	1:20	1:23
iDVD 6: Save as Disk Image	13:55	14:47	16:25
ROSETTA			
Adobe Photoshop CS2: Suite	2:50	3:02	1:16
Microsoft Word Scroll: Scroll	1:58	2:05	0:57


Best results in red.

All scores are in minutes:seconds, except for Doom 3 test which is frames per second. All systems were running Mac OS X 10.4.4 and had 512MB of RAM. The G5's processor performance was set to Highest in the Energy Saver preference pane. Using iMovie, we applied two different video effects to a one-minute movie, one at a time. We imported 100 JPEG photos into iPhoto and then exported them as a QuickTime movie and as files, resized to a maximum of 2000 by 1500 pixels. We created a Zip archive from a 1GB folder in the Finder. We ran the Demo 1 test on a beta Universal version of Doom 3, which was set to use UltraHigh graphics at a resolution of 1024 by 768; all advanced options were set to Yes except for vertical sync and antialiasing. We converted 45 minutes of AAC audio files to MP3 using iTunes' High Quality setting. We saved an iDVD project containing a 6:46 movie as a disk image. The Photoshop Suite test is a set of 14 scripted tasks using a 50MB file. Photoshop's memory was set to 70 percent and History was set to Minimum. We scrolled through a 500-page document using Microsoft Word. — Macworld lab testing by James Galbraith and Jerry Jung

and our tests with a beta Universal version of id Software's Doom 3 showed a huge increase in frames per second (see the benchmark chart). With the native iLife '06 applications, performance on the Intel iMacs was better, but in most cases not dramatically so; in a few of our tests, the new machines actually lagged behind the 2.1GHz G5 iMac.

Room for improvement. Like their immediate predecessors, but unlike the first-generation iMac G5s back in 2004, the new machines are not user-serviceable – meaning you cannot do simple hardware repairs yourself. And there are some other items on my hardware wish list: a stand design that allows height adjustment; more memory capacity (at least 4GB); a higher-resolution, more flexible iSight camera; and perhaps a FireWire 800 port. On the software side, users who don't own Microsoft Office may be disappointed to learn that AppleWorks is no longer included; though iWork '06 is, it's only a 30-day trial version.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you already have a recent Mac, there's no particular reason to rush out and buy an Intel-based iMac today – you won't find the computing experience all that different. Even if you're due for new hardware, don't buy a new iMac now if you run software that doesn't yet run on the Intel-based iMacs. If you're still not ready to give

up Classic software, either stick with what you have or go out and buy a G5 iMac – while they last. For other users, there's no reason to hesitate: the Intel-based iMacs are already great machines, and they'll only get better. Spring for the 20-inch model if you can afford it – the extra disk capacity and screen real estate easily justify the extra cost. 



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	GarageBand	iDVD 6	iMovie HD 6
■ Type	Music-recording app	DVD-authoring app	Video-editing app
■ Rating	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★½
■ Pros	Intuitive interface; easy to edit, tag, and publish podcasts; ducking feature takes the trouble out of tweaking backing audio levels; effective iChat integration; musical features as attractive as ever	Ability to rearrange menu structure in Map view; new wide-screen support; resizable windows; Magic iDVD creates polished projects with little effort; can burn directly to third-party DVD burners	New themes are visually interesting; real-time previews are helpful; audio effects are a welcome addition
■ Cons	Ducking controls could use some refinement; long podcasts don't always publish on the first try; movie playback can stutter	Choppy preview, even on fast Macs; Map view lacks a disc space indicator and slide-show transition control	Locked clips don't always stay locked; a few cosmetic glitches persist; performance annoyingly seems to vary by machine
■ Publisher	Apple Computer	Apple Computer	
■ Distributor	Apple Australia 133 622	Apple Australia 133 622	
■ Reviewer	Christopher Breen	Jeff Carlson	Jeff Carlson
■ Hot links	www.apple.com/au/ilife/garageband	www.apple.com/au/ilife/ivdv	

iLife '06

Digital lifestyle suite undergoes annual overhaul, adds iWeb

Another year, another iLife upgrade. Apple began 2006 much the same way it started each of the preceding three years – by revving the digital lifestyle apps that compose its multimedia suite. But this was more than just a by-the-numbers update. Each of the existing iLife apps introduces significant new features, from iDVD 6's automated DVD creation tool to the enhanced podcasting capabilities of GarageBand 3. And there's a new member of the iLife family – the web publishing program iWeb which aims to make it easy to create pages that share photos, podcasts, movies, and other multimedia.

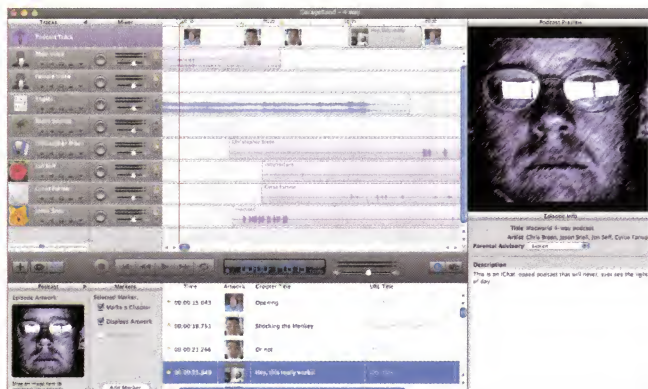
GarageBand 3

Drag-and-drop podcasting



MUSICALLY inclined Mac users – from professionals who need an easy-to-use music sketchpad to amateur enthusiasts who just want to string together pre-recorded loops – have been entranced by GarageBand. Unfortunately, if you don't have musical leanings, you've prob-

iChat to Podcast. GarageBand makes it easy to incorporate iChat conferences into a podcast recording.



ably given the program little more than a glance before proceeding on to iLife's other offerings. That's about to change.

'Casting pearls. Evidence of GarageBand's new focus is clear from the moment you launch the program. When you do, the app presents you with four choices – New Music Project, New Podcast Episode, New Movie Score, and Open Existing Project. It's the second option that's most interesting in this latest edition.

Select it, and you're greeted with a GarageBand window that features five tracks: Podcast Track, Male Voice, Female Voice, Jingles, and Radio Sounds.

Selecting Podcast Track lets you enter elements – including artwork, a title, an artist name, and an episode description – that will eventually make their way to the RSS feed used to publish your work.

The Male Voice and Female Voice tracks serve to record a Podcaster's voice. Each has been optimised – with effects including equalisation, noise reduction, and compression – to bring out the best tonal quality in each type of voice. The Jingles track is where you insert background music for your Podcast. You can choose from over 100 royalty-free musical passages supplied by the program, in a variety of styles and lengths, or you can add your own music loop or audio file.

Finally, the Radio Sounds track is where you can record sampled sounds mapped to GarageBand's Musical Typing keyboard – to add sound effects to your Podcasts. If you select this track and then the Musical Typing command from the Window menu, you can use your Mac's keyboard (or a MIDI keyboard) to trigger the sound effects mapped to these keys. You can also choose different sound sets, such as Comedy Noises or the atmospheric Transoceanic set, in the Sound Browser pane.

Duck hunting. To make all those tracks live in harmony, GarageBand now includes a ducking feature. When enabled, it automatically reduces the volume of a backing track when a lead track kicks in. For example, if a musical bed begins your podcast, the music will fade when you begin to speak. You use simple arrow keys to designate lead and backing tracks. Although you can customise the degree to which a backing track is ducked, finding the right slider isn't easy, and Apple's Help offers little help.

iPhoto 6	iWeb 1.0
Photo-management app	Type Web-page editor
🦆🦆🦆 1/2	🦆🦆🦆
Improved performance; new	Easy to use; beautiful templates;
output options, including cards,	simple visual controls; support
calendars and Photocasts;	for blogs and podcasts; well-
excellent full-screen mode and	integrated media browser
comparison features	
Still weak when it comes to	Inconvenient to publish sites
cataloguing off-line images	via FTP; no true image-optimisation;
	sometimes converts text to images;
	often uses PNG as an image
	format instead of JPEG
Apple Computer	Apple Computer
Apple Australia 133 622	Apple Australia 133 622
Ben Long	Jackie Dove
www.apple.com/au/ilife/iphoto	www.apple.copm/au/ilife/iweb

On my dual-2GHz Power Mac G5, ducking worked reasonably well. Some users may find that the ducks start too abruptly and return to full volume too slowly. Thankfully, you can draw your own ducks with a track's volume curve controls.

Once your podcast is done, getting it out to your eager audience is easy. Using the Share: Send Podcast To iWeb command, I was able to post a short podcast to an iWeb page with no problem. However, posting a podcast that ran just short of an hour took two tries: on the first try, iWeb gave me an error message when I attempted to upload the podcast (saved as a Spoken Podcast file in the Export preference pane) to my .Mac account. A subsequent attempt to publish it was successful. Overall, the mixing, converting, and posting process took about 40 minutes for the longer podcast.

iChat integration. GarageBand also makes it easy to incorporate online audio conferences into your podcasts or other projects. In the past, recording such conferences was a chore. GarageBand makes it easier, thanks to its integration with iChat. With an iChat audio or video chat started, simply click on GarageBand's Record button – each participant's voice will be recorded on a separate track.

In an audio-only chat, the icon of each participant appears in the Podcast Track as he or she speaks. For video chats, a screen capture of each speaker appears when that person pipes in. Although my first test produced tracks featuring only my voice, relaunching both iChat and GarageBand fixed that. The iChat integration worked remarkably well on my fast Mac over a speedy broadband connection with three others on a videoconference.

Another noteworthy new feature is GarageBand's New Movie Score option, which lets you import movies into a special Video Track for creating accompanying GarageBand scores. It works well with short clips, but some hour-long clips I imported stuttered badly during playback.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. As a musician, I'm a big fan of GarageBand. No program I own makes it as easy to create great-sounding music (and lets me have so much fun doing it). GarageBand's latest features bring that same ease of use and sense of fun to creating and distributing quality podcasts. And that should be music to any aspiring podcaster's ears. 🦆

“It's the people.”

What makes WiseIT different from other AppleCentres?

Everyone's prices and products are about the same, some have more locations, some are big, and others, like us, are small.

Being small is a good thing.

It means there are no distractions from the main game – customer service.

You know, giving you our undivided attention, *listening* to you, offering the best advice, and promptly addressing your service needs, that kind of stuff. Our staff are experienced, love their work and want to find the best Macintosh solution for you.

To continue to improve your WiseIT experience, we have promoted Anna Shearer to General Manager and welcome back Len Gay.

Anna has worked with Macintosh products for almost ten years and has spent most of her working life in the computer industry.

Len was one of the original service staff before we became an AppleCentre, and has almost twenty years of technical expertise in Macintosh products. Len has been the Computer Systems Officer at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery for the last five years.

Like we said at the top, “it's the people.”

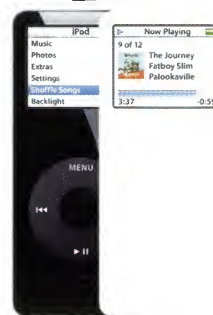
“And one more thing...”

We love Macs, iPods and Apple Software like iLife, iWork and iChat.

We think Macs have the most elegant, stable and easy to use operating system in the world with OS X Tiger, and with the new Intel Core Duo in the new iMacs and MacBook Pro the fast and easy part literally doubles overnight. And we would love to show them to you.

Above right: the new iMac 20 inch with Intel Core Duo processor for performance up to twice as fast as before.

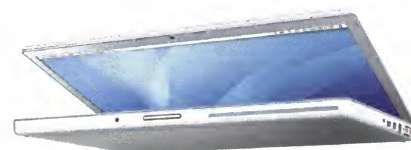
Below: the new MacBook Pro powered by a dual-core Intel engine. Up to four times the speed of the PowerBook G4.



No introduction required



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iDVD 6

Magic iDVD highlights several core improvements



IT'S a wide-screen world, and based on the latest version of iDVD, Apple is getting ready for the oncoming high-definition DVD evolution.

The future of burning high-definition discs is currently unclear due to two new competing standards, but improvements in iDVD 6 indicate that Apple is preparing for what's ahead, while adding welcome features for people creating DVDs today.

In sync with tomorrow's screens. The most obvious change to iDVD is support for wide-screen (16:9) format, which is native on HD camcorders and available as an optional shooting mode on many DV camcorders; 16:9 is also the ratio that high-definition TVs use. (Because a high-definition DVD standard does not yet exist, iDVD burns HD footage at standard DV resolution, a feature added in iDVD 5.

iDVD 6's themes have been designed to accommodate both the wide aspect ratio and the standard (4:3) ratio. In fact, you can switch between them easily in the same project. Some older themes have been updated for the wide-screen format, and even the ones that still work best in the standard ratio will also work in wide-screen format.

With that newfound flexibility comes another bonus: you can now resize the iDVD window. If you're working on a large monitor, you can expand the window to a more comfortable size – the window in previous iDVD versions looks like a glorified postage stamp on a 30-inch Apple Cinema Display.

Another example of Apple's forward-looking approach is its most significant new feature in iDVD: Apple has finally opened the door to burning projects with third-party optical drives. In iDVD 6, you can burn a DVD from a Mac that doesn't include a SuperDrive, a restriction that Apple arbitrarily imposed in earlier versions; iDVD 5 enabled you to save the project to a disc image, but you still needed to find a Mac with a SuperDrive to burn your project to a disc.



Magic iDVD. While preparing for the future, Apple hasn't left current users behind. Although some folks prefer to shoot video and photos and then edit them to their liking, a lot of people would rather throw it all on a DVD that has a little structure and polish without doing all the work. That's where the new Magic iDVD feature comes in.

Magic iDVD is a good starting point for developing a project, by letting you easily choose elements to fit into one of iDVD's elegant themes.

Like the Magic iMovie feature found in iLife '06 suite-mate iMovie, Magic iDVD lets you choose a theme and grab a bunch of video footage and photos, and then it assembles everything for you. Its interface is straightforward, and the result works well either for burning to a disc or as a foundation for customising later.

That said, Magic iDVD could use a few slight improvements to make it even better. For example, it needs some indication of how much disc space your material is going to occupy, so you don't delete media blindly in an attempt to stay within a disc's capacity. Also, the feature needs controls for choosing transition styles for slide shows (which are currently picked randomly) and for selecting a project's aspect ratio. (You can, however, modify both options by turning the Magic iDVD into a regular iDVD project.) Speaking of slide shows, you'll discover that iDVD is no longer bound by the 99-photo limit. Due to a clever method of bridging sections of the DVD specification, the iDVD team has made it possible to cram as many as 9801 photos into a single slide show.

Finding your way with the map. The Map view became more functional in iDVD 5, but in iDVD 6 it finally incorporates the ability to rearrange sections simply by dragging them. Now you can move a slide show from the main menu to a submenu, or promote submenus buried a few levels deep.

I'm particularly fond of the Smart Delete feature of the map. Control-click on a submenu that you want to remove and choose Smart Delete to zap the submenu but retain the elements (movies, sub-submenus, and slide shows, for example) further down the hierarchy.

The ability to resize the iDVD window helps when working in Map view, too. Instead of making the map elements smaller to fit into the visible space – which makes it harder to identify them – just increase the window size.


The map also points out when potential errors crop up. Position your mouse pointer over a triangular warning icon to view a Tool Tip explaining the problem.

More refinements. A number of smaller improvements make working in iDVD 6 better than working in

Wide appeal. You can create wide-screen iDVD projects for viewing on your wide-screen TV.

previous iDVD versions. At long last, submenus are referred to consistently as submenus, not folders (which seemed confusing to newcomers). Also, I'm not sorry to see that the Customize panel is gone; it has been replaced by an iMovie-style set of panes that occupy the right side of the window.

The only continuing irritation is that playback of the motion effects and previews is choppy, even on a fast Mac (a dual-processor 2.3GHz Power Mac G5, for example). However, the burned discs played back smoothly in my DVD player.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. iDVD used to be a simple application that let you burn a nice-looking DVD, thanks to Apple's themes. With iDVD 6, you can further control how you structure and customise your project, or let Magic iDVD do the thematic work for you. Although the future of DVD is uncertain, iDVD is ready to adapt to whatever comes next. 

iMovie HD 6

Apple spruces up video editor with themes and feature improvements



WHEN it was introduced last year, iMovie HD added groundbreaking features to Apple's entry-level video editor: support for high-definition video editing, the ability to include multiple formats (such as HD, standard DV, and wide-screen DV) in the same project, and performance enhancements that long-time iMovie fans had been waiting for.

With iMovie HD 6, Apple cleaned house a bit by sprucing up the application with slickly designed themes and a rearranged interface, and adding welcome features such as audio adjustments and real-time effect previews that give the update some heft.

Themes. Apple always leads with its prettiest attribute when touting new features, and the new Themes feature certainly qualifies. Themes are similar to iDVD motion menus — they're previously created movies into which you can add your own photos and video clips; the Road Trip theme, for instance, resembles a camera moving over a cluttered desk, with photos appearing in open books.

Populating a theme is as easy as dragging clips or photos to a new Drop Zone palette, and then entering a text title. When you add the theme to your movie, iMovie renders it as a new video clip. The advantage here is that you can edit it as you would any other clip; the Open variant of the Reflection-White theme, for example, was longer than I wanted, so I trimmed it to display only one appearance in my drop zones.

The disadvantage of an applied theme is that you can't easily go back and edit what you've created. If you want to change a photo or title, you need to re-create the theme from scratch. Also, the drop zone contents don't always render at a sufficiently high



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resolution: the Chapter component of Reflection-White ends by zooming in on an image in the drop zone so that it fills the entire frame, but both photos and videos rendered poorly.

I'd like to see more than the five included themes (each of which, to be fair, has as many as nine components), but I'm sure we'll see custom themes from third-party developers soon; there doesn't appear to be an easy way for average users to create themes.

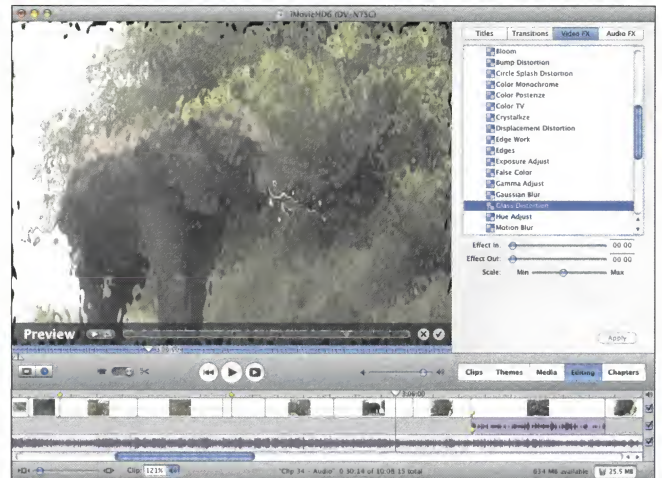
Real-time previews and new effects. When you click on a theme, transition, title, or effect in iMovie HD 6, a preview appears in the main monitor window. On the two Macs I used for testing — an older 1.25GHz PowerBook G4 and a dual-processor 2.3GHz Power Mac G5 — the preview playback was occasionally jerky, but I expected that from an unrendered preview. When you do preview something, it plays back as a continuous loop (which you can stop playing by clicking on a button in the monitor). I especially enjoyed this feature when I was previewing video effects, such as the new batch of Quartz Composer effects.

Much more interesting are the new audio effects, which use OS X's Core Audio features to apply reverb and delay, change the pitch of people's voices, and add other effects. The Graphic EQ effect provides a 10-slider equaliser for manually adjusting audio, with seven presets to get you started.

And I'm happy to note the inclusion of the Noise Reducer control, which can help to eliminate sounds such as the motor hum created (and recorded by) many portable camcorders. It appears to be a brute-force tool — just one slider controls the degree to which the effect is applied — but it worked well in my tests.

Apple also spotlights tools I've wanted for years: more precise typographic controls. Control-clicking on a text field allows you to choose OS X's Font dialog box, from which you can choose font sizes numerically, as well as apply other attributes. However, I couldn't get this feature to work at all. Apple is looking into the problem. From the Font dialog box, though, you can bring up OS X's Character Palette to insert special symbol characters that are difficult to access via the keyboard.

Easy themes. Add photos and video clips to the new Drop Zones palette to populate iMovie's new themes.



Real-time effects. The Quartz Composer video effects, such as Glass Distortion (shown here), are previewed in real time in the monitor, enabling you to see what you're getting before applying the effect.

Performance voodoo. New features are welcome, of course, but how does iMovie HD 6 perform? As with some previous releases, the answer is not consistent.


On my two Macs, I encountered very few problems: one crash while importing video, and some sluggish playback when several applications were running and my PowerBook hadn't been restarted for several days. Since restarting, I haven't encountered any slow playback. On my Power Mac G5, performance has been stellar. However, reports indicate that some people are running into slow, choppy playback and other glitches. (One early culprit with iMovie and QuickTime 7.0.4 was Telestream's Flip4Mac, a free utility that enables Windows Media files to play back under QuickTime Player.)

Unfortunately, iMovie has exhibited this behaviour since at least version 4: it runs perfectly fine for some people, and poorly for others, even given similar hardware and software. So from my experience alone, iMovie HD 6 seems solid and consistent with the gains made in iMovie HD 5.

That's not to say there aren't bugs. For example, clicking on a photo in the Media pane prompts a preview incorporating the Ken Burns Effect even if that option isn't selected in the new Photo Settings palette; applying the effect on the photo works correctly, however. On the upside, the Ken Burns Effect now consistently eases in and out, making it more useful than in the previous version of iMovie.

I also found that audio clips held in place by the Lock Audio Clip At Playhead command sometimes didn't remain locked.

If the past two iMovie releases are an indication, Apple will likely issue a bug fix release fairly soon (hopefully, by the time you read this).

Australian Macworld's buying advice. iMovie HD 6 isn't as revolutionary as the previous iMovie release, but there are enough improvements — such as real-time previews and audio effects — to make it a solid upgrade, especially since it comes packaged with the rest of the iLife '06 suite. 

iPhoto 6

Improved performance and new output options make for an important upgrade



THE tricky thing about novice or consumer software is that while novices' skill levels might not be very advanced, their level of expectation for aesthetic value might be very sophisticated. Like its predecessors, Apple's iPhoto 6 provides tools that are easy enough for novices to use but doesn't compromise on image quality. It offers everyone the ability to output the kinds of images that they're used to seeing every day in print and on the web. While iPhoto 5 focused on new editing features such as the Adjustment panel and Raw file support, version 6 focuses on output and organisation.

Performance and management. As detailed in our First Look, the program's most important new feature is a dramatic boost in performance. Importing, scrolling, and navigation are all much faster in version 6, the interface feels snappier (on my 1.6GHz PowerBook G4 and other faster Macs), and switching in and out of Edit mode is much peppier. What's more, the program's library can now hold as many as 250,000 images. If you use iPhoto regularly, these features alone make iLife '06 well worth its price.

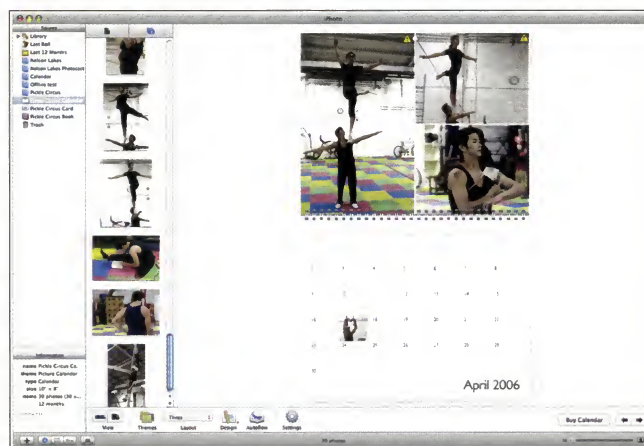
iPhoto 6 packs much more than under-the-hood adjustments. Upon launching the new version, you'll see iPhoto's new interface. As with iTunes, Apple has shed the cumbersome brushed-metal bezel and given iPhoto a simpler, cleaner, more professional look. Otherwise, most of iPhoto's interface remains the same.

Full-screen editing. In addition to its new look-and-feel, iPhoto 6 sports some new buttons. Alongside the old Info and Keyword buttons; you'll now find an Enter Full Screen button. Click on it, and iPhoto's interface – along with your desktop and any other windows – will completely disappear, replaced by a solid black field in which your image will be displayed as large as possible. In full-screen editing mode, you can edit your photo without the distraction of other interface elements or colours.

Blocking out the rest of your Mac desktop is a really nice way to edit, and iPhoto's full-screen editing mode provides access to all the features you'd normally have when editing. With a simple preference change, you can tell iPhoto to toggle automatically in and out of full-screen editing mode any time you double-click on an image.

Complementing the full-screen editing mode is a Compare feature, which lets you display up to eight images side by side. You can select any of the comparison images for editing without leaving Compare mode, and you can easily change the currently selected image by pressing the keyboard's arrow keys to move to the next or previous image.

Full-screen editing mode and side-by-side comparisons are great additions to iPhoto; they provide capabilities that a lot of high-end editing and cataloguing programs lack. Compare mode greatly simplifies the process of picking out just the right image from a full day of shooting.



Save the date. iPhoto 6's Calendar feature lets you easily lay out calendars of any length.

The Effects palette is iPhoto's only editing addition. With the Effects panel, you gain single-click access to black-and-white conversion, sepia-toning effects, simple saturation changes, and edge effects such as vignettes and blurs. These tools won't help images with serious problems, but the Effects panel is handy for quickly applying simple adjustments to most images.

Photocasting. For years, iPhoto has allowed users to share their photo libraries with other iPhoto users on the same local area network. With version 6, you can now easily share your photos with other users anywhere on the web, whether they use iPhoto or not.

You must have a .Mac account to use Photocasting – iPhoto will use your .Mac storage to host the photos you choose to share. To start Photocasting, simply select an album and then click on the Photocast button on the toolbar. You can select a size (dimension, not bit-depth: all JPEGs are automatically 8-bit) for your images – small, medium, large, or actual size – and even protect your pictures with a user name and password. When you click on the Publish button, iPhoto will upload your images to your .Mac account, resizing on-the-fly, if necessary. Once finished, iPhoto will give you the option of e-mailing a notice that contains the web address.

Other users can subscribe to your Photocast simply by choosing iPhoto's Subscribe command and entering the address. The Photocast will appear in their iPhoto library, just as albums do, and subscribers will be free to view or copy all of the images in it, just as they can any other image in their library. You can configure your Photocast to automatically update whenever you change the source album.

Users without iPhoto can view your Photocast from any RSS reader, including Safari RSS. Simply point readers to the address, and they'll see the photos displayed just as they would any RSS feed.

Output. iPhoto's book-making and print-ordering facilities have been much-improved, but Apple still doesn't offer those features to Australian customers (though they are still promised).

Meantime third parties such as Digital Da Vinci and The Shoe Box offer similar services locally, but we were unable to test their quality in time for this review.

For web-gallery creation, Apple has replaced iPhoto's HomePage integration with automatic export to iWeb, iLife's new web-building app. Simply select an album and click on the iWeb button, and your photos will automatically be poured into one of iWeb's page designs.

Other output improvements include options for borderless printing on printers that support it, the ability to export 16-bit TIFF files, and the option to tag images with a ColorSync profile while importing.

Whereas previous versions of iPhoto always copied your images into an internal library, iPhoto 6 includes a preference for simply referencing images in their original location (just as in iTunes). This means that you can now use iPhoto for cataloguing offline volumes, such as CDs or DVDs, onto which

you've archived pictures. Unfortunately, when you're ready to edit an image that is offline, iPhoto provides only a generic prompting to find the missing file, not a request for the specific volume. Because of this, iPhoto is still not suitable for the type of cataloguing that you can perform with a dedicated application like iView Media Pro.

iPhoto's importing features have been improved; you now have the option of tagging images with a ColorSync profile upon import. For users who want to run a colour-managed system, this is a great addition, though it works only for images that iPhoto copies into its library.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Apple has done an excellent job with the iPhoto 6 upgrade. The performance improvements alone should please most iPhoto users, while the full-screen editing mode, new output options, and Photocasting feature make the decision to upgrade to this version a no-brainer. 

iWeb 1.0

Easy-to-use web-building application joins Apple's iLife suite

AS Apple's first entry into consumer-based desktop web publishing, iWeb 1.0 is designed to let home or small-business iLife users with no HTML or design skills build simple, beautiful web sites. Thanks to its integration with the rest of the iLife '06 suite, iWeb also makes it easy to incorporate audio, video, and still photographs into those sites. While iWeb is ideal for novice publishers, people with more experience and higher expectations will probably find it limiting.

Instant web pages. If there's an easier way than iWeb to design and publish a web site with a desktop app, I've yet to encounter it. Apple has done a superlative job of incorporating the multimedia, blogging, and podcasting elements of today's consumer web publishing environment into iWeb. It's not only valuable for a typical online photo album, but also functional for a wide variety of personal and business material you may want to publish on the web.

You access iWeb via a window with three primary parts. The Canvas, located in the middle, is the workspace where you choose a template; fill that template with images, text, and background graphics; and create new headlines and text boxes. A resizable Site Organizer, which lists all of your pages in order, is located to the left of the Canvas, and a toolbar at the bottom of the window contains text and image controls.

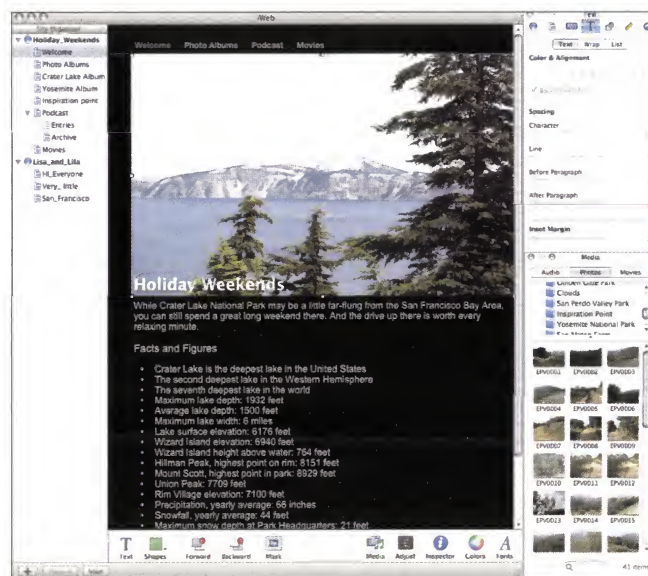
Though there are only 12 main templates, they are beautiful and easy to change and tweak. Each template comes in several

variations – photo album, movie page, blog, podcast, and others – so you can create multiple types of pages with a uniform look and feel. An About Me page style within your chosen theme is designed to be flexible so you can add any combination of images, text and links to it. However, if you intend to publish a podcast or a blog, it's a good idea to use the page designated for it, since those pages are encoded for easy RSS subscription and contain a built-in Subscribe button. Movie pages contain a window designed to hold one video clip at a time per page.

With iWeb's 12 templates, your web pages come out fully formatted; blogs and podcasts, for example, are automatically formatted for RSS subscription and have a built-in Subscribe button.

You can alter elements on your pages, without destroying the expertly designed Apple templates, via iWeb's Inspector window. Using the window's seven panes, you can change page

Paneless. iWeb's single window lets you see your page, adjust your site's organisation, and drag and drop to add media



dimensions and colour; add backgrounds; choose text attributes such as typeface, size, and line spacing; set margins, word wraps, and lists; add drop shadows and reflections to your boxes and images; and designate links. You can also use the Inspector window to password-protect your site and to track how much space is used on your iDisk. I had no problem with any of these controls: they were swift and dynamic and performed their tasks without a glitch, though text boxes were occasionally a bit hard to grab.

By the time you've finished customising your page, it may look nothing like the underlying template. Design-challenged folks can be reasonably sure that, if they don't mess too much with the core elements of the page — such as the placement of main images and the size of type — their sites can look both original and well-designed.

iLife integration. iWeb's single window lets you see your page, adjust your site's organisation, and drag and drop to add media.

Once you've selected your template, iWeb makes it easy to populate your pages with all the digital media managed by the iLife '06 suite. You use the Media Browser to pull that content into your pages. You can simply click and drag images from the Photos pane, movies from the Movies pane, and audio of any kind, including podcasts, from the Audio pane. You can also drag and drop elements from the Finder if you want to.

The resulting photo-album pages are elegant, and the slide show built into every photo page with two or more photos is exquisite. Watch out for the Adjust Image palette, though — using it can dramatically increase file sizes. One image ballooned from 68K to 80K when I started adjusting its brightness, contrast, saturation, and so forth.

Also watch out for the mysterious text-to-image conversion gremlin. Even if you're using a web-friendly font such as Times, Arial, or Verdana, iWeb will often convert your text into a PNG image without warning. Such a conversion is detrimental because it adds unnecessarily to the page's file size, and it prevents the affected text from being searched and catalogued by web spiders.

One-click publishing. Once you've designed your site, uploading it to .Mac is easy: you just click on the Publish button. If you have a .Mac account, iWeb will upload only pages you have changed. This doesn't take long. For example, one test site I built took 13 minutes to upload initially. However, it took only one minute to upload a spelling change to one page.

Here's the weird thing: if you create two — or ten — web sites in iWeb, and you're using one-click publishing to upload to your .Mac server, you have no choice but to upload all the sites. If you want to separate your various sites — to send them to different servers, for example — you can use the program's Publish To A Folder command, which separates the iWeb file into its component folders. That process may scare off real Web newbies.

With your .Mac account, you can work on the same iWeb sites from different locations, such as your home and your office, but the procedure for doing this isn't explained in the current documentation; Apple says it's planning to add a tech note.

Design deficiencies. While iWeb can create very attractive sites, some elements of the program's templates can be inflexible. You can't move the navigation menu, for example. While you can hide certain pages from the template's navigation menu, something that the program creates automatically and changes dynamically, there's no way to create submenus. For example, if you have a photo section of your site that you want to designate as the master page in the navigation, you have to create links to all of your individual albums manually — this is easy, but a submenu would be more elegant. And there's no way to start an iWeb project without using one of its built-in templates.

iWeb has no image-optimisation feature, which is something I hope Apple will consider for the next version. Many weekend photographers create large digital images, which will download slowly onto viewers' computers. Large images also take up a lot of space on the .Mac server. Apple says that images are optimised to 800-by-600 pixels, and iWeb does translate non-web image formats such as Raw and TIFF to the web-friendly PNG format, but that's not the same thing as reducing the file size to attain a reasonable download time.

Moreover, Apple most often uses PNG as the image format for iWeb — instead of the more popular JPEG — despite the fact that, in most cases, PNG files are larger than JPEGs. While your JPEG photo-album images are not converted into PNGs, the formatted thumbnails for your album covers are. Apple says that it favours the PNG format because it supports transparency, as well as other effects featured on iWeb pages.

Clunky FTP. While iWeb heavily favours .Mac as a publishing vehicle, you can use the app to post a web site to a non-.Mac server. To use the Publish To A Folder command, navigate to your user folder/Sites, find the files you want to copy, and upload them via FTP. If you're accustomed to old-fashioned web publishing — creating pages in a tool like BBEdit or Dreamweaver and then uploading the results via FTP — that process may seem unnecessarily complicated.

If you do use an FTP program to send selected iWeb pages, updating your web site isn't simple. Because you're bypassing iWeb's upload-everything process, you have to download the HTML file you want to change, view its source in your browser, copy and paste that source code into BBEdit or TextWrangler, make the changes you want, and then upload the saved document to the server.

Finally, if you don't use .Mac to publish your site, iWeb's signature slide-show, hit-counter, and password-protection features will not work.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you have a .Mac account, no web skills, and a desire to build a well-designed web site, iWeb 1.0 is definitely for you. If you use any iLife app and have a .Mac account, iWeb will be well worth your time. If you're accustomed to traditional web publishing, the debut version of iWeb will disappoint, both in terms of convenience and in important areas such as image optimisation, menu navigation, and site portability. 🐼

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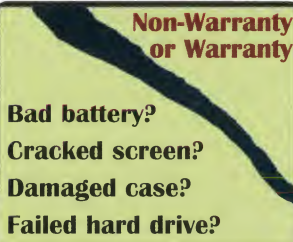
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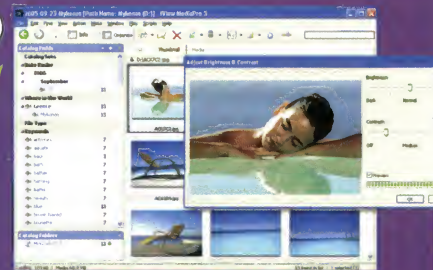
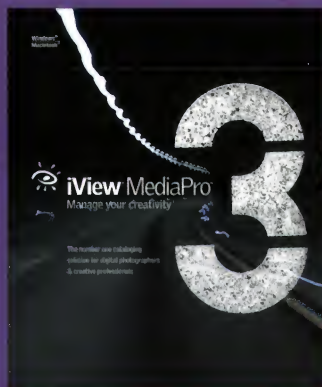


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Something to chew on.

By Alex Rieneck.

What it is, and what it isn't.

WAY back in the dim past, years and years ago when the world had the same season pass to wrack and ruin that it has now, and I was in primary school and wore short pants and collected bubblegum cards, I can remember these really important conversations that used to happen in corners of the playground when one or other of us had some sort of "parent problem" that needed sorting out. They would be serious conversations, and probably more adult than most of the ones that I have nowadays, and — most clearly of all — I can remember the ones that we had about heroin.

Back then, due mainly to the Vietnam War, heroin was just starting to appear on the media radar, and the scaremongers were in full frenzy with the "schoolyard dealerships" theory being paraded on the TV every night of the week. Understandably, after suitable parental filtration this stuff was discussed behind various sheds during the eating of sausage rolls and soggy sandwiches. Over time, thought on the subject reached consensus. "They give you the first few for free, and then, (horrified look) they start *charging* for it." Our parents could relax. Anyone theorising that "just trying the first few free ones then, sounded safe enough" was roundly shouted down. They young are after all, usually more conservative than the old.

Nowadays, of course, heroin is a vast business employing hundreds of thousands of people and poisoning the lives of millions more, but its central marketing technique is common knowledge and has been co-opted wholesale by the computer industry. "Give 'em a few for free, and then start charging" is standard operating procedure. The whole idea of shareware and of trialware is based on this technique.

Game Demos are another classic example. Get addicted, and then pay through the nose. Get addicted to the single-player games and then pay for the game servers. In extreme addiction cases, some people have paid real world money for virtual world objects.

And remember when .Mac was iTools and free? And iMovie ...

Me? I remember those schoolyard conversations really well and I look on anything "free" with deep distrust. I have lost track of the number of free webmails I have abandoned after they started charging and I find a deep gulf opening beneath my feet when people tell me that they pay money for content on the internet.



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After all, I figure, the point when they start charging is a simply excellent time to go cold turkey. It works as a technique, too, even if it is a rather jagged way to live life. Then again, the older I get, the less I enjoy the feelings of deprivation and pain that go with going cold turkey. Nowadays I find myself consciously avoiding some things simply because they are obviously going to stop being free in the future.

Now the playing field has tilted, alarmingly. Google Video and iTunes are going head-to-head with content that is dynamically priced. Crappy

old TV shows (and crappy new ones) compete head on, with free product made by people in the street. Now *Herro from Japan* and *Aunt Carol Wisdom* are functionally equal to *The Brady Bunch* and episodes of *Desperate Housewives*, except *Aunt Carol* doesn't cost \$US1.99 and hey, didn't those two shows used to be on free TV?

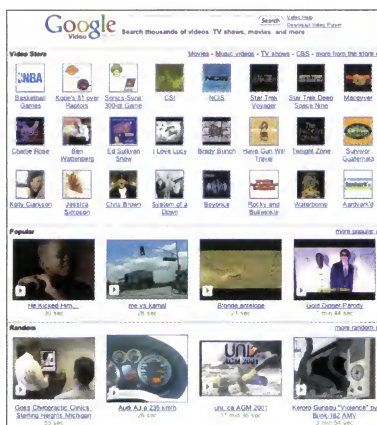
How long is it, I figure, before some zero budget Podcasts cost more than the megabuck druck that the TV networks shovel out? As it is now, *Aunt Carol*, for one, is far, far funnier than any um, 35 episodes of *Everybody Loves Raymond*. How awful, I think, to perhaps get addicted to pay TV at this late stage in life, when I have so far pretty much avoided even watching "free-to-air" TV.

Of course, "free-to-air" is a bit of a shifty. One day, in a commercial break, add up how much you would be billing the networks if you charged your normal hourly rate for the commercials you watch in a normal prime time hour. In my case, it would be a lot cheaper to go to the movies, and watch product placements.

This thing is that, while Google thinks that it can still turn a profit while carrying the cost of hosting and streaming free video, iTunes places the cost of hosting squarely on the shoulders of the Podcaster. It is a simple case of pay up to be heard and, obviously, either start charging or shut up when the costs become too steep — due to popularity.

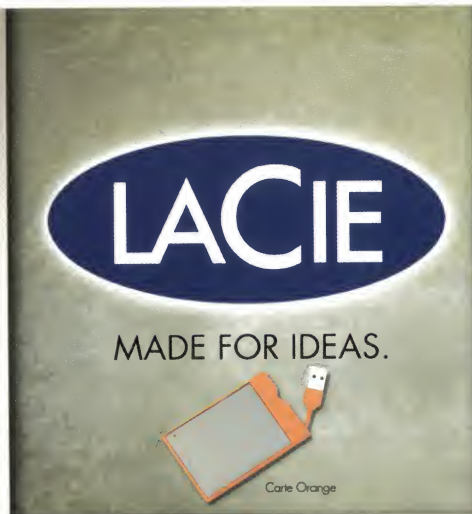
As matters stand now, if you have a broadband connection, and a desire to encounter a glut of free entertainment such that the world has never seen before, free video awaits your quivering eyes. But be careful — it ranges from the utterly dull to the completely crazy and porno and, be even more careful, because, I guarantee it, after you get addicted, they will start *charging*. (Shakes head, sourly.)

Alex Rieneck has been a technology commentator since the days of the bone abacus.



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